

*THE STOUT ADVENTURE OF
MARY STEWART*

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by

The Hon. Ruairidh
ERSKINE OF MARR

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A PREFACE TO THE WORK

THE study of the impact of ideas on important personalities, as that of their effects in life and action, is surely a legitimate object of inquiry. It is plain that if, with a reasonable amount of certainty, we discover the ideas, we explain at the same time, and in a like measure, the lives and actions of those in whom they were operative.

I do not pretend that this way of approach to the composition of History is in any sense a new contribution to the science of it. It has been practised, in part at least, before; but it has been much neglected of late, owing, I suppose, to the gross materialism of the age we live in, and the prevailing tendency to popular, in contradistinction to "classic," methods of preparing and presenting History.

The present study, to which I have given the title of *The Stout Adventure of Mary Stewart*, is an attempt to explain the Queen by means of the ideas by which I believe she was influenced during the whole time of her brief tenure of the capital power in Scotland. With her fate and fortunes afterwards, that is to say, during the eighteen years of her captivity in England, I am not concerned on the present occasion, although I wind up the thread of my narrative with a brief allusion to the end to which these ideas betrayed her.

As to the rest, I wish to add here a word or two touching the style used in this book. That it is a good

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deal borrowed of writings in the native language of my country is a circumstance that will not, I hope, arouse prejudice. Certainly, I have sought throughout to render it as little "archaic" as may be; and I hope, as plain and agreeable to read as I wish and design it to be.

R. ERSKINE OF MARR

April 1937

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CHAPTER I

An Historical Background to the Queen's Reign and Portrait

THE portrait of Mary Stewart, Queen of Scots, has been drawn for us very often. We see her at a full length, as it were, in many a particular and general history; and she has been done from the bust upwards, and yet smaller, in miniature (that is to say, in lesser writings), times near without number. All these different representations of the Queen have backgrounds to them, no doubt; but in few, if, indeed, in any of them, is care enough taken, or true detail observed. In fine, the authors of them have not used sufficient pains to render their backgrounds suitable to the subject, which is the more to be regretted since, without a just understanding of the period to which the Queen and her reign belong, hardly shall we come to understand her, or the nature of her reactions to the events that marked her times, or those of these times themselves to former ages and passages of history.

It chanced that it happened to Mary as happened formerly to some of her predecessors on the high throne of the Scots, namely, that she also was born into the political system of the west. From it she received such politics and political learning as she had, and by it, humanly speaking, her fortunes were shaped, her course directed, and her fate as a monarch determined. The west is a part, and, on the whole, the most important part, too, of that general system of European politics, whose divisions were determined formerly on a geographical principle, answering in effect to the four capital points

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of the compass. Thus, according to the theory of this system, besides the western division (France, Spain, England, and Scotland), a northern (the Scandinavian countries together with Russia, so far at least as that Empire might be said with truth to meddle at all in the affairs of Europe) was presumed; a southern (Italy, and the kingdom of the two Sicilies), and an eastern (Turkey in Europe, and the states in Europe which the former had overrun and reduced to her rule); but, then, besides these four grand geographical parts or divisions, there was yet another, according to the same theory of politics, in the shape of the central European Powers; that is to say, the loose confederacy of independent and semi-independent kingdoms and principalities that made up the second Roman Empire. But though the different parts of this system were fixed according to the geographical situations of the different countries that composed it, yet it was supposed further, that each of the groups was bound as a whole by the rest, and, secondly, that each of the different groups shared with the others a certain community of civil and religious interests, which, applying to each of the parts of which the system in the gross was made up, kept the whole mass joined together. It was natural, all things considered—and in this respect at least the system conformed to some fact in history—that of the five grand parts or divisions that composed it, the west and the south should draw nearer to one another, and engage more often on a common plan and in a common scene, than was the case with respect to the more backward and the more remote parts, in a geographical point of view, of the same system; which latter, to say truth, engaged but seldom, in a political way, with either the west or the south. With

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regard, however, to the central states, it is proper to remark here that, on the whole, their relations with the system in general, as those with their fellows in particular, were but occasional, and never very close and intimate—in a word, theoretical rather than real. When the Empire was strong, there was a fair measure of concert with the west and the southern powers; but when, as happened much more often, it was weak, and the principalities composing it were at war with one another or at feud with their nominal head and leader, then there was little concert of this or any other kind, and, by consequence, the system was left to shift for itself, so far at least as the states of middle Europe were concerned.

From the writings of Guiccardini, as from those of Nicolo Machiavelli and other political thinkers of moment in Italy, who speculated much on politics in Renaissance times, it is easy to collect what great interest the problem of European unity had for these men, and, too, for many of their contemporaries in other countries; and further, what great zeal, learning, ingenuity and talent they, individually and collectively, applied to the subject spoken of. The older vision of a *respublica Christiana* had long ceased to correspond to any political reality in their day; and all through the sixteenth century we see kings and their ministers scheming and plotting together in order to advance the royal power, on the strength and with the aid of the ever-growing sense of nationality that was now diffusing itself through the different nations of Europe. Under these conditions and in these circumstances of political change and continuous intellectual unrest it was natural that the scribes and doctors of political science should turn with alacrity to the notion

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of a systemisation of the powers of the existing great states and the common political interests of Europe, and in their different writings commend very strongly this idea, in so far at least as it might seem to point out a way to the revival of that great principle of European unity which the wars of the Empire with the Papacy had destroyed, and thus caused to be lost, temporarily at least, to our continent. It happens not unseldom, however, that in proportion as hopes are indulged, to the same extent occur the disappointments which, in the event, are apt first to overtake and next, to dissipate them; and though it is true enough that some at least of the misfortunes that overtook the notion glanced at befell in course of time the second also, yet, in this case, some compensating circumstances appear; for now was born to political science in Europe the greatest of all the theories of post-medieval polity; that is to say, the theory of the Balance of Power, which in turn gave birth later to that of the Concert of Europe, whose successor on the same throne is the League of Nations.

The theory of the political system of the west dates from very early times. It took its rise from the Treaty of Verdun, which was made in the year of our Lord 843. It will be recollected, no doubt, that by the terms of this famous peace the old patrimony of Charlemagne was divided, Neustria, which was to become France a little later, and Austrasia, which later still became Germany, thus being set in rivalry with one another, and in rivalry, too, with yet another part of the Holy Roman Empire, that is to say, the Kingdom of Lotharinga. "The date 843," says a writer in the *Cambridge Medieval History*, "is a convenient one to register the beginning of the individual life of modern nations"; and the same writer takes

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occasion of the incident to observe that "the consequences of the Treaty of Verdun have made themselves felt even down to our own day, since from 843 to 1920 France and Germany have contended for portions of *media Francia*, the ancient home whence the companions of Charles and Pepin went forth to conquer Gallia and Germania."

In France, the early struggles of the Crown with the nobles bear, as well touching the cause as regarding some at least of the effects of them, a strong resemblance to those that occurred about the same time in the allied and neighbouring kingdom of Scotland. In both countries the armed disputes of the nobility with the sovereign took their rise in most instances from a notion of the *regis concilium* or King's Council, which the great lords claimed the right to form, to the entire exclusion of all the other subjects, save the great churchmen. Real or imaginary neglect, or real or pretended invasion, on the part of the King, of this alleged right from time to time stirred up much civil strife in both countries, with the result that both were long kept disunited at home, and inconsiderable abroad. According to Philip de Comines, Louis XI was the first of his race *qui mit les rois hors de page*; but some of his predecessors on the throne—for example, Philip I, Philip Augustus, and St. Louis—sought, and strove to some purpose, to enlarge the power and authority of the Crown, to put down rebellion among their titled subjects, to enforce observance of the law, and to bring the whole realm to that strong and compact form to which it was brought in later times, and which it still retains. Still, despite these and other endeavours of a like nature on the part of successive princes of the house of Valois, the power and authority of the King,

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relatively to those of the great nobles, remained weak, but very precariously established, all through the period of the Hundred Years War; and even for some considerable time after the period mentioned came to an end, it is true to say that the state of lawlessness which then prevailed in France was little less general than that which prevailed in Germany at the same time, and, too, for much the same reason. Even so powerful and popular a prince as Francis I was much embarrassed by his nobles, who concerted together in order to cross his measures and defy his authority as often as they thought they might do so with impunity. Affairs continued on this footing in France till Louis XI came to the throne, who, though he may not have been the miracle of statesmanship which his historian—and also his flatterer, Philip de Comines—thinks him, yet he strove to much effect to set the nobles in that place, within the bounds of the constitution, to which they, as others, belonged, but from which they were fond to stray with arms in their hands, and defiance of the royal authority in their hearts. I make no doubt but the French nobles had been brought to that submission, to that complete dependence on the Crown to which under Louis they were partly, and later under Richelieu they were entirely reduced, a good deal earlier in the history of France than actually happened, had it not been for the intervention of the Protestant Reformation, which in France, as in the allied country of Scotland, drew to its side, on one score or another, many of the nobles, both great and small, who under cover or on pretence, and always in the name of religion, took up arms against the Crown; and thus was continued in both countries, and, too, long after it had come to an end, but for the reason spoken of—the Crown's old

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feud with the nobles, and the nobles' old quarrel with the Crown.

In Scotland, despite the ever-lengthening passage of the years, and event and incident in plenty, which conspire to come between this object and the public eye, the memory of her ancient league of alliance and friendship with France remains green among the people. When precisely this alliance was formed and this friendship began it is impossible to say with any tolerable degree of certainty. Some think that the first of many successive understandings originated in the time of Charlemagne; and, for my part, it seems to me that they who so conjecture have some probability, and certainly not a little tradition, on their side; but yet others there are who, not content with this so early beginning, ascribe to it an origin in times yet more remote. In the Gaelic language of Scotland the word for a Gaul is "*Gall*": such at all events was its first meaning, though latterly it was often used to denote an inhabitant of the low country or, alternatively, a foreigner. Now it happens that this word *Gall*, which is common to the native languages of Ireland and Scotland, enters into many place-names in both countries, and, moreover, in both occurs not unseldom as a personal name. It would seem, therefore, that natives of Gaul were settled in Ireland and Scotland long before the era of Charles the Great, and, possibly, long before the conquest of the country named by the Romans. Further, when the Empire of the west began to break up, by reason of the assaults, many times repeated, made on it by the barbarians of the north, divers of the learned men of Gaul, taking the alarm, fled overseas to the British Isles, and particularly to Ireland, where they settled. The seed of

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kings continued French long enough—indeed, far too much so, according to some later opinion, particularly that of the subjects who, in the time of the Regent Mary of Lorraine, sought to expel all Frenchmen from the realm, and Mary herself along with them. When the infant King James V was trusted by the Estates of Scotland to the care of Lord Erskine, to be educated by him under his own supervision and roof, a part of the charge then laid on this lord was, that he should instruct the prince in “Latin and Fransh”; and though the King’s proficiency in respect of both might not in the event, and in the gross, amount to much, yet the command itself is proof enough that in those days “Fransh” (for the Auld Alliance), and Latin (for the Holy See and Court of Rome) were thought to form an indispensable part of the education of a Scottish prince.

The political situation of Scotland being what it was, and the habits and mannerisms of political thought being what they are at the present time, it is very natural that ascendancy principles generally should come to tinge opinion and deflect judgment according as both are expressed in some modern history. Thus Mr. Hume Brown, whose history of Scotland is taught in the public schools of the country, thinks, or at all events there affirms, that “from the reign of James III foreign relations increasingly absorbed the attention of the Scottish kings”; thus seeming in some sort to imply that before the reign mentioned the Scottish kings were not used to give much attention to such matters; whilst yet another Historiographer Royal for Scotland, now dead but bred, like the others, in ascendancy principles, imagines that Scotland played no part at all on the political stage of the west till James IV came to the throne. To kill two birds with

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one stone is economy as to effort as wise and useful as any that can be had and practised very probably; accordingly, I think it proper to observe at this conjuncture that none of the Stewart kings was more busy in the scene spoken of than James I, the problem of the marriage abroad of whose children introduces the student to an extensive narrative, to a close network of negotiations with foreign courts, to alliances propounded and understandings arrived at with the heads of Continental states; and I doubt not, too, that it would be no hard matter to prove from existing historical sources that yet earlier kings and ministers were often similarly employed much farther back in history than this correction should establish, and than either Mr. Hume Brown or the other seems to imagine. The subject of our political relations, in later mediæval times, with France—the acknowledged mistress of the system of the west in particular—and with the states of the Continent in general, has been much neglected as well by the common historians of Scotland as by such as specialise in respect of particular parts and aspects of it; though M. de Chavrebiere in France, and in England Dr. Williamson (author of a book on the subject of the political evolution of that country), have done something to reduce the reproach spoken of. Certainly, their example puts to shame the silence and the apathy of the Scots, whose excuse is, I suppose, that they have the misfortune to inhabit a country in which, owing principally to the intellectual incubus of the two Unions, enterprise lags, initiative is discouraged, the arts and the polite sciences are starved, and talent withdraws across the Border almost as soon as it appears.

Of the Queen's immediate predecessors on the throne

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of the Scots her father, James V, and her grandfather, James IV, were ever warm friends to the cause of the "Auld Alliance." With zeal, if not always with success, they sought the maintenance and the perpetuation of the old relations of the country with the principal states of the European continent, all which took their rise, and had their centre, in this famous pact. The second of the two kings mentioned may be said with perfect truth to have sacrificed his life, the flower of his nobility, and churchmen, many thousands of the commonalty of the realm, and the peace, security, and well-being of his kingdom to his too great devotion to this very cause; whilst the second, defeated and disgraced at Solway Moss by the English, whom he had imprudently attacked in the same interest, soon after, at his palace of Falkirk, turned his face to the wall and expired, almost, it would seem, of the vexations and embarrassments occasioned him by reason of his pro-French rule and policy. After the Scottish Sindbad the Sailor, the Earl of Arran, had been enticed from the Regency by means of the gift of a dukedom and a fine estate in France, and Mary of Lorraine governed Scotland in his room, it was natural that the cause of the "Auld Alliance" and French politics generally should regain under her rule the ground which both had lost under that of her feeble and vacillating predecessor in power. She had talent, but little good fortune, which latter perhaps was in part more her own making than occasioned her by reason of the conduct of others; for the extreme leniency of her treatment of the rebellious Protestant lords points to a weakness, if not of nature, at all events of public conduct, on her part which takes off a deal from the merit of the first. If she had more amiability than strength of character, and

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kindness of heart than power of will to discharge her different measures—what then? Every Scot who is not a slave to his religious passions or the silly bubble of his country's political fortunes, admires her memory and loves her nature—*sith d'a b-anam*, peace to her soul! Even on her death-bed in her prison of Edinburgh Castle she declared her political faith as unequivocally, with the same strength and fervour, as she confessed the religion into which she had been born and baptised, and was now about to die. With moving words, she exhorted such as stood about her at the time, to hold fast to France and the Old Alliance: by these means alone, she was persuaded, could the English be kept out, and the cause of the independence of the country maintained with honour and success.

I pass now to the subject of the Queen's own contribution to the story of the Alliance, and to the composition of the more immediate parts of the background to my portrait of her. I intend in the first place the document which is known to history as the "Donation of Mary." This document was prepared at the French Court, and was signed at Paris on the eve of the Queen's marriage with Francis, son and heir to the King of France. The instrument she subscribed was kept secret at the time, but its purport soon became known at the courts of the west. By it she pledged her kingdom in the meanwhile in favour of Henri II, the Queen also covenanting that in the event of her death without lawful issue the bond must take effect absolutely; that is, that the realm of Scotland should fall to the French Crown.

It is plain that, according to the laws and usages of the Scots, the Queen had no right or power whatever to make any such gift; but, despite this, it is no less plain

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that should she make it, the grant must remain null and void, so long as the Estates of the realm should withhold from it their assent, which in effect is tantamount to saying that the Queen's Donation was stillborn. In short, the constitutional position with regard to the Donation resembles in some sort that of the Treaty of Edinburgh, to which, it will be remembered, the Queen, who had a perfect right to do so, refused her assent, as often as she was importuned (which happened not unseldom) to give it, but without which it could not be effective in law. For the rest, I crave leave to remark that, as it would be no easy matter to persuade a sane man to cut his own throat, so to presume a whole nation as willing to surrender its independence in obedience to the word of command of the ruler of that nation, is not a contingency susceptible to serious discussion.

Such, then, being in brief the constitutional as well as the common-sense view of the matter now on the carpet, let us proceed next to examine the same matter in yet another light, namely, that of the Old Alliance in conjunction with the political system of the west. When two independent countries agree to unite for common military purposes, and this alliance between them continues for a great number of years, and is attended throughout its course by much intercourse of a social and cultural nature, it happens not unseldom that in the event the stronger, the larger, and the more wealthy of the two allied countries absorbs the other. Reasoning, then, on these principles of political science, it would seem that, no matter how obnoxious the Queen's Donation might appear in the eyes of a Scottish patriot of those times, yet in form as well as spirit it was a true piece of political realism. Soon or late, the Franco-

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Scottish Alliance must come to an end; and if this end should prove, for Scotland, political absorption by France, in that event would appear a logical fitness, and a harmony of effect in regard to cause which would not be near as apparent were Scotland to escape this particular fate, but yet to succumb to political absorption by some other country. For my part I know that had my lot been cast in those times, and had I been indulged a choice suitable to the occasion, I would have voted unhesitatingly for "France and wooden shoes" in preference to England and boiled potatoes.

The crocodile, on whose unfeeling cheek the popular fancy is fond to trace the tear of hypocrisy, is the true type and emblem in the natural order of the Whigs of all countries, ages, races, constitutions, and climes. By some of them Mary's Donation of the year 1560 is denounced for an act of unparalleled treachery to Scotland; and, further, in the course of these violent denunciations, the worst motives and the shabbiest principles of public conduct are imputed to her very freely; but not, it would appear, with much, if any, ground in fact for them. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Queen's mind was determined for her on this occasion principally by her uncles of Guise, who saw in her marriage to the Dauphin of France a golden opportunity of pushing their own fortunes, and at the same time and in the same way, those of the nation to which they belonged, though no doubt Mary's own girlish and very natural wish to cut a fine figure on the stage of the west had something to do with her signing of the pact. In any event, what is plain above the common with regard to the event spoken of is, that if of old time it was thought bad policy on the part of such as lived in glass houses to throw stones, a similar

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precaution was no less advisable yesterday, and is just as commendable to-day. The Whigs, therefore, who objected at the time, and continue to object, to Mary's Donation that it intended the political absorption of Scotland by France, would do well to preserve their breath for other porridge, since the plain effect of their own policy with regard to Scotland has been her political absorption by England.

The fact that quarrels between and among families occur pretty often, and sometimes engender much bad blood, takes off nothing from the merit and usefulness in general of the institution mentioned, no matter how deplorable such feuds and dissensions may be. Nor, on the same reasoning, is the fact that the different countries which composed the western group of nations fell out very often among themselves, and even waged long and bloody wars against one another, to be considered as a proof of the impropriety of the system mentioned, how much soever the latter may have first disgraced and afterwards weakened the former. He who enters a darkened room is unable to distinguish immediately the different objects that are in it; but, as soon as ever his eyes are grown accustomed to the darkness, this he can do in a measure, not indeed as perfectly as he would do were he to have the advantage of a full light, but with some degree of certainty at least. Similarly, he who examines with care the political writings of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries and studies them till he has familiarised himself, as well with the spirit as the matter of them—such a one, I imagine, will soon or late become conscious of a certain concert and unity of thought, and even to some extent of political aim, that pervades and marks the whole of this extensive range of state literature.

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I have observed already that the notion of a Europe divided into a number of politico-geographical parts was laid in the presumption that a certain community of political interests was a natural consequence of the physical situations of the different kingdoms of Europe; and further, that this was the guiding principle, as it was the controlling force and factor, in respect of the formation, and the different activities, in the province of politics, of the groups of states of which the system, considered as a whole, was compounded and made up. But, in addition to the presumed community of political interests spoken of, each of the groups was supposed to share in common with the others a certain social ideology, of which a remarkable instance occurs in Leslie's history of Scotland: I mean that part of it in which the Bishop undertakes to record the substance of a private conversation that passed between the Queen and her bastard half-brother, the Earl of Moray, not long before she and Darnley were married. "Do I advise you to marry again?" said Moray, according to Leslie. "That undoubtedly is the most direct means of preserving to our family the succession to the crown of Scotland; but there are also others not less safe. Shall I advise you against it? I have, I allow, a strong impression that your remaining single is the only way to secure the honour and tranquillity of your realm. Your own personal dignity, as you have no doubt considered, would be lowered by a marriage with any man of a rank inferior to your late princely husband: yet where will you find on earth a consort so illustrious in birth and descent as he? There are but three nations among whom you might find a fitting partner—France, Spain, and Italy. I omit from consideration Sweden, Denmark, and foreign

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countries such as these, since they are barbarous, and unbecoming your manners and mode of life."¹

Moray's apparent omission of all mention of the name of England in the course of his conversation with the Queen on this occasion is explainable in the light of the resolution which he is known to have entertained at this time, that come what might, on no account must she be allowed to seek a second husband across the Border, his subsequent proceedings on the occasion of his half-sister's marriage with Darnley, when he took up arms against the union and suffered forfeiture and banishment by consequence, pointing strongly not only to the strength of his feelings on this head, but also, indirectly, to the authenticity of the conversation reported by Leslie. As to the rest, the same conversation confirms in signal fashion what has been advanced already in the present work, namely, that the countries of the west shared with one another, and with Italy, the head of the southern group of Powers, and the principal nation beyond the Alps, a common social ideology, as well as on particular occasions a community of political interest.

Mary Stewart was the last of her race to conclude an alliance, defensive and offensive, with France; and of her it may be said with perfect truth that she was in a very particular sense its ultimate expression, its last embodiment, as well as—for this also came to pass in due course—the cause of its death, and later, its ghost. With her it perished; for though in after-years it was sought to be revived by some in Scotland who appeared in arms in support of the cause of Charles I, yet the attempt failed, owing principally to the inactivity of the

¹ This translation appears in Father Forbes-Leith's *Narratives of Scottish Catholics*.

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Frenchmen to whom the proposal to reopen it was made. And thus with these few observations touching the political system of the west, and the "Auld Alliance" of Scotland with France I complete the background to my portrait of Mary Stewart.

CHAPTER II

The Die that was Cast in France

IT will be remembered that in the year 1548 the Queen, on whose head were but two or three summers at the time, was sent into France by the Estates of Scotland, to the end that she might escape the attentions of Henry VIII of England, who wished to kidnap the child in pursuance of his settled design to reduce Scotland to his will and sway. The journey was made in safety, and thereafter the little Queen was entertained at the French Court, her care and education being trusted to her mother's kinsfolk, the Guises. In 1558 she married Francis, eldest son to Henry II, who, dying in 1559 of a wound received at the jousts, thereupon the succession to the Crown opened to his son, who in right of his wife now became King of Scots, and Mary, in right of her husband, Queen of France. But Francis II, who was ever sickly, died early in the month of December 1560; and this event wrought a great and an immediate change in Mary Stewart's fortunes; for it happened that simultaneously the family of Guise lost the principal direction of the French affairs. The fall from power of the family mentioned was speedy and complete. When the English agent, Throckmorton, went to Court on the twenty-second day of the same month he found the appearance of it much altered. The new King (Charles IX) and the Queen-Mother were surrounded by the Constable and the Admiral of France, Cardinal Chatillon (who had married a wife and turned Protestant), D'Andelot, and others of that family; but not one of the house of Guise was present, and but few of their political friends either.

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Catherine de Medici (widow to Henri II), who was now at the head of France, detested very heartily the name and the whole race of Guise, and in this dislike the Cardinal's niece, the Queen of Scots, was included to the full. The precise cause of the feud between the two women is obscure: some say that it took its rise from a slighting remark passed on the Italian by Mary, and repeated to the former by some who overheard it, and were no friends to the latter. The Queen of Scots had a sharp tongue, and employed it on occasions with a deal more freedom than discretion. Thus she jested once in Moray's presence on Elizabeth Tudor's retention of a crucifix and candles to her altar after she became a Protestant, which may well have sown some at least of the seeds of the enmity that existed afterwards, if not at the time glanced at, between the two women. Moray was hardly the kind of man to neglect to report to Elizabeth that which the other had said, somewhat unpleasantly, about her in his own hearing. It is trivialities such as these that often set women by the ears, by giving occasion to some whose humour or whose interest is to part them, and to keep them apart, to do it with complete success.

Since Francis II was King of Scots, it would seem that he ought to be reckoned into the number of the Scottish kings; though, to the best of my belief, none of the Scots historians make this reckoning, nor those of France either; nor yet the English. On the occasion of his marriage with Mary Stewart, Francis wore the imperial crown of the Scots, which had been sent into France by the Estates at his father's particular request. Further, the Scottish Estates acknowledged him as King of Scots, he and Mary ruling the country conjointly as

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long as their brief union endured. Even the sectaries who had opposed with their arms the royal authority acknowledged Francis and Mary as "King and Queen of the Scots"; for in the year following the marriage, when some of the principal men of the faction named sent representatives into France, instructing them to pray their Majesties to give their assent to the Treaty of Edinburgh, the King it was, but not Mary, who received them, harangued them, and finally dismissed them, unsatisfied, from his presence. It might be, of course, that the voice that spoke on this occasion was the Cardinal's, rather than the King's, just as it might be that the hand that had the principal direction of public affairs in Scotland throughout the brief period of the first royal Union was the Cardinal's, and not the hands of the King and Queen. Still, neither one nor the other of these suppositions takes off in the least degree from the weight of the fact that Francis and Mary were joint acknowledged sovereigns of Scotland during the brief period mentioned. Small wonder, then, that Henry II, moved by the brilliant spectacle of the marriage within the cathedral church of Notre-Dame, should have exclaimed to some about him at the time that now indeed were France and Scotland "one country."

The death of Francis, conjoined with the fall of the Guises from power, appears to have persuaded Mary very early in her widowhood that now her course in France was run. She could not but have known, one would think, that what the ascendancy of Catherine de Medici meant as to the Guises, the same event must entail on her; that is to say, a closed France, and a complete exclusion from power so long as the Italian woman lived to sway her son, Charles IX, and pursue her private

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interest in his name. In these circumstances of discouragement, of days of despondency touching her French prospects, what could be more natural, or more like to occur, than that the Queen's thoughts should now turn to Scotland, and turn, too, with a deal more force and purpose than had been the case hitherto, apparently? Accordingly, the Queen resolved to return to her own country; but, then, before this weighty resolution on her part could be put into execution, it happened that two events occurred—one in her own kingdom and the other in France—to which particular regard must be had in this place, since together they formed in some sort the metal from which, humanly speaking, the die of Mary's fate was cast.

Not long after it became known in Scotland that the Queen was resolved to return to her own country, the two parties by which it was divided at the time began to draw to a head, in lively expectation of her home-coming. About this time, the Catholics held a great council at Stirling; and at the meeting, which was convened by the bishops with the approval of many of the great laymen of the realm, it was resolved to send a deputation to the Queen, to the end that they might know her mind touching the government of the kingdom, the article of religion, and other matters of the first importance to themselves and their country. Though they did not venture to attack the council of Stirling with their arms, or seek to molest it in any other way, yet the Protestants of the capital and the south proceeded at once to retaliate in kind. Accordingly, they held a meeting of their party at Edinburgh, at which, as at the other, it was resolved to send a deputation to the Queen, with the same object that the Catholics had in view when they set on foot

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the meeting at Stirling. In due course the two deputations set forth on their respective errands overseas. That of the Catholics, which was headed by John Leslie, Bishop of Aberdeen and historian of Scotland, was the first to meet the Queen, the Protestant deputation, which was headed by Lord James Stewart, Mary's bastard half-brother and a great man among the sectaries, being received by her the day following.

The Queen met the Catholics whilst she was on her way from Rheims (of which city her uncle, the Cardinal, was Archbishop) to Joinville, where was situated the principal strength of the Guise family, to which she had been invited by the Duke of that name. The Cardinal was with her at the time; and whether or no this was the case with regard to his brother, it is tolerably sure that nothing that was resolved on this occasion by the Queen and the Cardinal but was submitted also to the other, and approved or rejected by him likewise. The meeting with the Bishop of Aberdeen occurred on April 14, 1561, and that with Lord James Stewart the day following (as I have said already) at St. Dizier, a village or small township situated within a league or two of the Castle of Joinville.

Now, the substance of the Bishop's proposals to the Queen was as follows: That she should trust herself, her cause, her fortunes, and her interest, to the Catholics, who, Leslie told her, were yet strong enough to sway the entire country. He had the word of the Earl of Huntly, he told her, that, should she decide to land at a northern instead of a southern port, an army of 20,000 men would be there to receive her, with which force (he said) she might easily make herself mistress of the whole of Scotland, since the sectaries, relatively to the Catholics, were yet but few in number, ill-armed, and worse officered

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and disciplined. Whether or no the Bishop counselled the Queen to bring with her Frenchmen into Scotland does not appear from Leslie's narrative, nor yet from any other source that I have consulted on the subject; but it would seem that so great was the Bishop's confidence in the promises of Huntly, in particular, and so perfect his trust in the zeal and armed strength of the Catholic lords in general, that this matter at least he refrained from pressing, more particularly as it must have been plain to him, and to all his friends in Scotland, that it would be more creditable to the Crown, and in all ways more fitting, that the Queen should gain Scotland to her cause without French aid than with it. Nor does Leslie tell us how these proposals which he was empowered to make in behalf of the Crown and the cause of Catholic religion in Scotland were received by the Queen and the Cardinal. All we know for sure on this head is that next day the Queen and the Cardinal met in conference Lord James Stewart; and, further, that at this meeting—or rather by way of an immediate consequence to it—the Bishop and the Catholics were sent away empty, but that Lord James Stewart and the Protestants were received into the bosom of the Queen's and her uncle's confidence.

On the whole matter, it would seem that the proposals¹ submitted to the Queen by her half-brother, Lord James Stewart, strike a more practical note, and conform better to common notions of good policy than is apparent, immediately at least, in the case of the counsel of which Leslie was the spokesman on behalf of the Catholics. No matter what might fall out at home or abroad, the

¹ In brief these were that the Queen should trust herself and her cause to the Protestants with her half-brother at their head.

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Queen was already sure of the support of her Catholic subjects; and as she was by nature extremely averse from the shedding of blood, the consideration that her acceptance of Huntly's plan of campaign must certainly involve the country in civil war weighed much with her, no doubt, as well as with her uncle, to whom the advantage to their niece of a home-coming that should be entirely peaceful, and agreeable to all her subjects, irrespective of creed and political opinion and punctilio, must have seemed an end very much to be wished at that particular conjuncture of their own and their niece's affairs.

The part which Lord James Stewart, who is better known to history as Earl of Moray, played on this occasion seems to have been at once plausible and astute. He allowed with seeming candour that, despite what the Queen might have heard at the French Court touching the article of religion in Scotland, or that might have been reported to her from thence by some of her subjects, by far the greatest number of the latter was still Catholic, and, further, that the nation as a whole was now as firmly attached to the Holy See as ever it had been in times past. As to himself, professing the greatest devotion to his half-sister's person and interest, he urged her, first, to grant him the Earldom of Moray, and, secondly, to appoint him Regent of Scotland during her absence from the realm, pointing out to her at the same time the great advantage to her and her affairs which such a course on her part must bring about, since in the events spoken of, he, the leading man among the Scottish Calvinists, would be charged with the principal authority within the realm, and thus he would be enabled to keep all men and things at home quiet and in good order, pending the Queen's return to her own country.

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That Mary should have succumbed to the arts employed on this occasion by her half-brother, in order to bring her to that state of mind with regard to himself to which it is plain he used these arts in order to persuade her, is no just cause of wonder; but that the Cardinal and his brother the Duke should have been so far deceived by the other as to agree to trust their niece to him and his companions in heresy is surprising history, more especially as their conduct in advising the Queen not to grant him the two honours which he had solicited of her would appear to show that they at least had not yet gone over, bag and baggage, to the enemy, and still more so, I imagine, since neither the Cardinal nor his brother could have been ignorant of the fact that it was but lately that the Scottish Huguenots had been in arms against the Crown, and that though they now professed to be in the peace of it, yet that they were known, or at least generally suspected, to be hand in glove with Elizabeth Tudor in plotting yet further treasons and still greater mischiefs for the realm.

He who is wise after the event is not necessarily a sage by reason of this wisdom; and on the same reasoning he who in a novel or romance commits murder, and proceeds thereafter to make of it a tale of mystery for his readers is not necessarily an expert as regards the commission of crime, or yet the detection of it. It is plain that the wisdom of the first is but a borrowed light in some sort; and as to the second, since the novelist himself contrives the murder, and weaves and holds in his own hands all the threads of the different clues that lead in his narrative to the detection of the criminal, very probably the author's skill in this respect is, like his tale, pure fiction. But if the part of the historian is to be wise

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after the event, though he happen to show very little wisdom in any other situation, it is plain that he must discover it on this occasion, not as his imagination and his pride in his own powers of apprehension may tempt him to show it forth, but strictly agreeable to the nature of the event, according as it is recorded for him in the pages of history; and from this never may he deviate, nor yet embroider over much touching it. Considered, then, in the light glanced at, it would seem that, though the risks inherent in the policy of putting the Queen to nurse, as it were, among the Scottish Calvinists were very considerable, yet that, on the whole matter, this course rather than the other—namely, that of trusting her to the Catholics—was to all appearance the better policy.

It may be judged by some, perhaps, that the Cardinal, who was a prince of the Church, and always very forward in all causes and undertakings having to do with religion, must have hesitated a deal before he agreed to send his niece to Scotland under the wing of a man who, himself a heretic, was the chief of the heretics among whom she must make her home, and, since the seat of government was in their hands, from thence must rule the country, not, however, as she must wish, but as they might demand and could oblige her to do. The supposition advanced above is plausible enough, no doubt; but, then, two principal things there are which, separately and jointly considered, take off a deal from the primitive force of the reasoning glanced at, the first being that at the time when the policy spoken of was adopted by the Guises the political fortunes of the family were in a very low state; the second being that, though notions of toleration in matters of religion were not yet—that is in 1561—come to be as widely diffused and generally entertained

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as happened in Europe a few years later, yet they had penetrated already to some parts of the west, particularly to France, where a spirit of compromise in respect of the religious differences of Catholic and Huguenot was now abroad, and, too, had worked some considerable effect in the political field already. It may well be, therefore, that no matter how disagreeable to the Cardinal and his brother might be the notion of sending Mary to Scotland, there to consort with heretics, and make her home among them, on the footing of a complete toleration of their religion to the Protestants, but on the other hand an absolute denial to the Catholics of all practice of the Faith to which they and the Queen, as the others, belonged, yet that some contemporary usage in France in regard to this matter, more in the Empire, and other accommodations of the same sort elsewhere in the west, united on this occasion to persuade the two to trust their niece and her fortunes to the Scottish Protestants; and perhaps in this way (for in some way or other it came to pass most certainly) were the Cardinal and his brother brought not only to approve the Queen's going into Scotland as the guest in some sort of her heretical subjects, but even to counsel it as being, all things considered, the best course to take in circumstances wherein a choice of them was hardly to be had at all.

Still, I suppose that what more than any other consideration drawn from a just examination of the case, braced the Cardinal and his brother to run the hazards of the policy glanced at, was the Queen's right of succession to the English throne.¹ They may well have

¹ Mary Stewart was great-great-granddaughter to Henry VII of England, and, presuming Elizabeth Tudor's bastardy, rightful heir to the throne of that country. But allowing that Elizabeth's birth was legitimate, Mary was still heir-presumptive to the former's throne.

reasoned that since she was now, and must always be, sure of the support in arms of the majority of her subjects, that is to say, the Catholics, so to seek to gain the Protestants to her cause and person by means of planting her in their midst was, though risky, yet good enough policy, more particularly since her half-brother had professed in their presence so great a love of her, was so entirely devoted to her cause and interest, and, besides, was himself so great a man among the heretics.

Further to this matter, it may well have seemed to the Cardinal and his brother that the proposals of the Catholics, since they involved the greatest risks, and, humanly speaking, were sure, if followed, to provoke wars, and otherwise bring much disquiet to the realm, were little comparable, in a point of view of the Queen's immediate and future interest, with the policy set forth by the Protestants, more especially as both the Cardinal and the Duke knew well enough that such government as there was in the country at the time was entirely in the hands of the heretics, and not in those of the Earl of Huntly and his friends. They knew that France was no longer in a situation to succour her ancient friend and ally of Scotland, but that, on the contrary, she now stood in near as great need of aid as the other. The Queen, then, must help herself, by the doing which with success she should at the same time succour the cause of religion, not in Scotland alone, but in England also—nay, more, in France and the west generally, in order to which ends what was absolutely necessary to be brought about was the Queen's succession to the English throne in a peaceable manner, in any event with as little disturbance to the public life of the two kingdoms as might be, no matter what the private difference of

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opinion with regard to the article of religion among the subjects of Scotland and those of England might be, and were. They reasoned probably that whilst a Scotland at peace with herself was an end which of itself was much to be desired, and as diligently sought, yet that in a point of view of the Catholic cause and religion in the west, a Scotland and an England that should be united under the rule of a sovereign who, though a Catholic, yet should come to enjoy the esteem, and command the willing obedience of her Protestant subjects of both nations, was obviously a much greater end, and one, too, that was well worth such sacrifice of scruple, and such apparent bending of conscience, as the ordered pursuit of it must in any case involve. The Queen, they imagined, was already high in the esteem of the English Catholics, many of whom, indeed, looked to her rather than to Elizabeth as their lawful prince; provided, then, that Scotland could be kept quiet, and the young Queen so shape her public course as to draw to herself the affectionate regard of her Protestant subjects, in these events it was but reasonable to believe that when in God's good providence and the natural course of events a way across the Border to the English throne should open to her, the Queen, who had surely spirit and talent enough for such an enterprise, would take it, and thus complete at a single stroke, as it were, her own and their cause, as well as that of France.

Still, as says the later of the two national bards, "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley"; and probably if an angel, or even a whole army of them, were to descend from heaven in order to put some order and good management into human affairs, no great improvement would follow the angelic visitation, so apt is

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man to err, and heaven to counsel us in vain. It is plain, then, that no matter how fair the reasonings set forth above may have seemed to the Cardinal, and his brother the Duke (and that some such reasonings were employed by them at the time is credible enough), the success of the plan of trusting Mary to the Scottish Protestants, instead of sending her to Huntly and the Catholics, must depend principally on the young Queen herself, on her character, and the measure and quality of her mental gifts, chief among which latter must be reckoned her power to play with credit and success to herself and her cause the difficult part in the drama of pious hopes and intentions, mixed with high ambition, that was now preparing in Scotland.

Mary Stewart had a full share of the ordinary female accomplishments of the age in which she lived, and perhaps some others which are not commonly associated to her memory. She conversed, sang, danced, embroidered, spun at the wheel, and rode in the field as to the manner born of the Renaissance, and prescribed by it to all her kind and station in life. She spoke French and the Germanic dialect which then prevailed at the Scottish Court, and in some parts of the lowlands also; but it appears that of true English she had ever but a very imperfect knowledge. Whether or no she spoke, as her father and grandfather had done, the language of the vast majority of her subjects is not known. The natural presumption, however, is that she had at least some Gaelic in her head; and, further, that she knew Italian, and had some knowledge of the Castilian tongue is sure also. With Latin, however, her acquaintance was more bowing than intimate by nature; for though she could read the Roman language well enough, yet she could neither

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address others in it nor yet understand very well what might be said to her in the same tongue, which is proved by the fact that when, not long after her return to Scotland, she received at Holyrood the papal Nuncio (De Gouda), she then had recourse to the services of an interpreter, who explained to her in a different tongue the substance of the father's Latin address. Though not in the least degree learned or studious and bookish by nature and habit, yet she was on occasions fond to try her hand at verse, some of which was a good deal praised by some of the principal French poets of the day, but which, having regard to the merit of these same writings, it is not unkind perhaps to suggest was praise more courtly meant than seriously entertained and intended.

As to the Queen's moral nature, apparently this was formed of such good, bad, and indifferent material as forms the gross of human kind. In her, no doubt, the first were in pleasing excess of the second, and the second less active than the third; but that she could do wrong, *pecca fortiter* on occasions, and do it, too, with obstinacy, and an apparent entire disregard for the time being of all that was best in her nature and education, her tale, which tells no lie on this head at least, unfolds. She had the irascibility of the Stewarts; but, like most of them in this respect, her anger soon cooled, so that at times she was forward to pardon insults and forgive affronts and injuries when and where she had done better to stay for a while the hand of the first, and restrain somewhat the promptings of her heart with regard to the second. She was headstrong, courageous, and, generally speaking, what the Gael calls *anamanta*, that is to say, sanguine, full of life and soul, and animal spirits. But, candid and

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open (sometimes to a fault), in all her ways and dealings with others, it was natural that she should expect of those that she honoured and trusted the like sort of conduct on their part in regard to herself, and, too, fall upon some despondency of mind and depression of spirit when, as happened to her often during her career, the expectations spoken of were disappointed entirely by the event. She was naturally of a religious turn of mind, and always professed her holy faith without the least fear, hesitation, or circumspection; but it would be a mistake to regard her as a very devout young woman at the time when she returned to Scotland in the year 1561. It is true that in her later years, when misfortune had chastised, and experience enlarged and ripened her mind, she answered admirably to the character spoken of; but, as Father Hungerford Pollen observes in effect in, I think, the preface to his *Papal Negotiations*, it was in no crusading spirit, or with the least intention to set the Cross above the crescent of her temporal interests and concerns, that Mary Stewart embarked for Scotland in the year mentioned.

The powers of her mind were considerable, but by no means extraordinary. She was ever quick to act with judgment in a crisis, which is proved by the success of her efforts to detach Darnley from the conspirators who killed David Rizzio, and her escape in his company from Edinburgh; and by other instances, all which show plainly her daring and power of resource on critical occasions. Still, what she lacked was power of concentration of mind and faculty, together with that sort of aplomb, of cool and continuous determination to pursue a settled policy to a just conclusion which marks the public conduct of the great women of history—such, for

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example, as Isabel la Catolica and Maria Theresa of Austria. Woman-like, she was apt to allow her private likes and dislikes as to particular persons, and her natural distaste for ways and measures that were foreign to her feelings, to estrange her from these persons, and to divert her from these courses, no matter how important it might be, having regard to her own ends and the public interest, that she should keep about her the first and pursue the second. By fits and starts, she had a good deal of application; but unfortunately for her not near enough of it, having regard to the troubled times in which she lived, and more particularly the difficulty of the task to which her hand was set. With regard to this last, though it would be little the truth to affirm that, of all the princes of Christendom then alive, Mary Stewart was the least well qualified in a moral point of view to discharge it with success, still that, though talented enough, yet she was temperamentally entirely unfit for it—this, I think, is plain as can be.

Her education was good, but by no means remarkably so. She was well instructed in the principles of religion by her uncle, the Cardinal, and such other pastors and masters as she had; but, on the civil and temporal side of it, a deal less thoroughly. As to crowns in general, and princes and their persons in particular, she entertained all the common feudal notions of the day, as she reminded John Knox, when on the occasion of one of her several verbal scuffles with him, she more than hinted that subjects “had no duty as such save to submit to the princes that God had appointed to them.” It is little likely that her instruction as to the internal politics of her own country was thorough, and still more unlikely that she had much acquaintance with the history of it.

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Youth she had, of course, and inexperience, which can be a gain as well as a disadvantage; high spirits, courage, and much charm of person and manner, besides talent; but considerable though these advantages were, and often though she came to use them to good effect, yet neither her education nor yet the quality and temper of her mind, which, indeed, was little subtle, fitted her to rule her country with success at that difficult moment in the long and eventful story of it to which she had the misfortune to be called, much less to impose her will and interest upon another and a larger country, the principal part and the greatest number of the subjects of which were hostile to her and the nation to which she belonged. On the whole matter, perhaps the best description that can be had of Mary Stewart's nature is the account of it which she herself composed, when, on the occasion of her untoward expedition against Huntly and the Gordons, she is reported to have said (in the hearing of the person who recorded the anecdote, apparently) that she regretted much that she had not been born a man, so that she might lie out in the fields o' nights under arms.

As to the Cardinal of Lorraine, the Queen's principal instructor and her political director-in-chief, both before and for some time after her husband's death, his portrait, well enough drawn, appears in the gallery of Mr. Outram Evennett's *Counter Reformation*. "Versatility" (he says) "was the key to his character; but it was also his canker. Not only did it make him appear hypocritical in the eyes of his enemies, often very unjustly; but it constituted a definite hindrance to the full use of his many gifts. He was overwhelmed by the profusion and exuberance of his talents; and he lacked that extra mental and spiritual power which talents in profusion call for, if they are to

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be rightly and coherently used. He had aims and objects in plenty; but he was without the single directing motive which makes the great man and the saint. Hence the appearance of ineffectiveness, which somehow takes the lustre from all his achievements." He seems indeed to have belonged to that not uncommon order of men who dream dreams and see visions habitually, and in this state catch at them very eagerly; but, awakening presently to the realities of life in general and their own circumstances in particular, soon tire and drop them, or, at all events, thenceforward pursue them with but a semblance of the zeal and energy which they were forward to apply to them at first. Such men and such minds are ever too prone to engage with schemes, and embark on undertakings, any one of which would need all their time, and the whole of their talent, in order to secure its successful prosecution, but considered, as these men are apt to take them, in the gross, baffle them entirely, and in the event sink them completely, more commonly than not. To affirm that the Cardinal had no just understanding of Scottish politics would be exaggeration as gross as for sure it would be so to affirm that no one was better qualified than he was to advise the Queen as to the matters mentioned. He was a constant and diligent student of politics, as well as a man of very good natural parts, and, besides, he was in close and frequent correspondence with his sister touching Scottish affairs during the whole course of her Regency, and from thence onwards till the time at which he first assumed the control of his niece's education. Still, that the Cardinal knew Scotland and her politics as well as he knew France and her politics—that is to say, as well as he knew the back of his own hand—is supposition not to be entertained

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for a moment. The probability is rather that his acquaintance with Scotland was restricted in a point of view of political knowledge to that part of the country (small indeed considered relatively to the rest) in which the seat of the feudal government was situated, and that by consequence the other and the greater Scotland was a matter that was more or less unknown to him. But his temper was ever sanguine, his belief in his niece profound, apparently; and the urgency of the whole conjuncture was such that probably it seemed to him that now indeed must he stake all on present opportunities; and as to the rest pray and hope for the best. And if in the event the Queen failed him, perhaps he did what most of us are apt to do in similar circumstances; that is to say, he blamed the instrument instead of the plan.

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The Muse of history is apt to grow somewhat sentimental when she goes about to record the circumstances of the Queen's departure from France. With a heart that is heavy with grief, Mary stands by the stern of her galley, watching with eyes that are filled with tears the receding shores of France.

Cha till, cha till, cha till Mac Creimein
An cogadh no sith, cha till e tuilleadh;
Le airgead no nì cha till Mac Creimein,
Cha till e gu brath gu Là na Cruinne.

That is, freely rendered:

No more, no more will Mac Criman return,
In peace or war he'll never return;
With silver or aught no more he'll return,
He'll never return till the Gathering-day.

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It is on the wing of these few beautiful lines that a Gael might well send forth his spirit to salute the memory of Mary's grief at her parting for ever with the land of her youth; but, then, with that instinct of realism that is ever present in the race, along with all its sense and power of poetry, probably the same Gael would remember that soon the eyes that now were wet with tears would be dried, and the heart that now was wrung no longer sad; for, but a little while yet, and Mary and the France she loved would be to one another almost as strangers. But surely a more realistic, and, all things considered, a more probable, and certainly a more symbolic interpretation of the same event should be to set the Queen, not sad and disheartened, but, on the contrary, glad of eye and joyous of heart, by her galley's prow, the while she gazes through the mist towards the Scotland of her hopes—agog to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm towards which her ship of destiny is bearing her.

CHAPTER III

The Scotland to which the Queen returned in the Year 1561

THE Scotland to which the Queen returned in the year 1561 was a very different country, probably, from the Scotland of her dreams, different, too, from others of a somewhat similar nature that had been implanted in her whilst yet she was abroad; and most certainly it was a very different country from the Scotland which appears in the general histories of Scotland, and that still passes with many for a true picture of it. The reason is, that these accounts are defective, and thus misleading in proportion as they are defective; since all are written in a feudal point of view, as though the royal court and the seat of government at Edinburgh were the sole proper objects of historical interest and study, and the much greater Scotland, which in general was but little subject to the influence of the first, and gave but a nominal obedience to the second, were entirely negligible, or at all events very little deserving of serious attention on their part. One of the principal historians of Scotland says in the preface to his history that he considers the early story of the country as of small importance, and on this account he skips the period altogether.

The institution of feudal government in Scotland explains sufficiently the rise in it of a school of historians whose students have written the story of the country from this particular angle, and principally in the interest of the polity mentioned; but hardly, I imagine, does the same event explain in the sense of excusing the singular

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devotion of these writers to this one and particular point of view, nor yet the bias with which their different writings are charged. I propose to say something here on this head; for besides the many divisions and the diversities of opinion introduced into the country by reason of the religious differences of the sixteenth century, there was a previous and a civil cause of disunity, and to this it is highly proper that some regard should be had at this conjuncture.

There can be small doubt, I suppose, that the principal object of David I (1113-53) in introducing the thin end of the wedge of feudalism, in the shape of the charter, into that part of the kingdom which was subject to his sway, was to enlarge the power and extend the authority of the Crown. Without a doubt he had the same end in view when he went about to found the different royal burghs which he erected in those provinces of the realm wherein his rule was acknowledged; to build, or cause to be built, in the same districts, the many great stone places of strength that appeared in those parts of the realm in his time; and, lastly, to found monasteries and cathedral churches served by Religious the greatest number of whom were drawn, not from his own dominions, but from foreign countries. It must be allowed, however, that such innovations on ancient law and established practice as this king made were well conceived, and skilfully introduced; for it is true to say that he insinuated them among his subjects rather than forced them on them. For instance, he retained the Scottish¹ alongside the feudal service of knighthood; and in all his measures designed to enlarge the power and

¹ Scottish service consisted in occasional service in the field, whereas feudal was a definite charge upon the land.

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authority of the Crown he was ever careful to disturb existing practice, and traditional manners and customs, as little as might be. Still, that the settled purpose of his rule was so to introduce feudalism into the country that, in course of time, it might come to supersede the native or Celtic polity¹—this, I think, admits of no dispute.

The racial complexion of the Court of the Alexanders casts a deal of light as well on the means whereby the reforms of the later kings of the Atholl dynasty were effected, as on the political and social structure and state of the kingdom at the time. The sovereigns themselves affected the French language, and French manners and customs, though we are not to suppose but that at the same time they were conversant with the Celtic tongue spoken by the vast majority of their subjects; and, further, that they conformed to the Celtic polity, as far as it was necessary for them, as rulers of a still predominatingly Celtic country, to do so—this is but reasonable to believe. Frequenting the same Court were “Frenchmen” or “Normans,” as they are indifferently styled by the feudal chroniclers, and by some historians of a later age; and in these magnates (whether they were laymen or ecclesiastics) it is easy to discern the agents of such innovations on the ancient polity of the realm as David and his successors were instrumental in bringing about, in those parts of the country which were more immediately and unequivocally subject to their rule. Besides Frenchmen at the Scottish Court were some English also, refugees for the most part, who fled their own country, and went to Scotland, in consequence

¹ The difference between Celtic polity and feudal was briefly this: the former took its rise from notions of kinship, but the latter from the land. Thus, according to Celtic polity, the King was “King of Scots”; whereas in the eye of feudal polity his proper designation was “King of Scotland.”

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of the troubles occasioned at home by reason of the invasion and conquests of William of Normandy; but these last, being ever much in a minority at court, played but a small part, relatively to that of the others, in furthering the designs of the King, as these were reflected in his anti-Celtic policy; and it is worthy of note at this conjuncture that such planting of English in Scotland as David and his successors undertook was mainly restricted to the province of the Lothians, which, it will be remembered, had been invaded and reduced and to some extent colonised at one time by the Saxons and other Germanic tribes; and though now it had long been recovered to the Scottish Crown, and re-Celticised in part at least, yet it still retained, so far as the majority of its inhabitants were concerned, the Teutonic tongue spoken by the forefathers of these invaders.

The ceremonies that marked the coronation at Scone of the third Alexander (1249-85) illustrate at once the mixed complexion of the Court at the time and the dual nature of the polity practised in parts of Scotland since the age of David I. Thus we are told that after the Sword of State had been girded on the young King by the Bishop of St. Andrews the prelate proceeded to detail to him the different obligations under which as King he lay, translating the Latin formulæ into Norman French, now the principal, though not by any means the only, language of the Scottish Court, this part of the coronation ceremonies being brought to a conclusion within the walls of the abbey church of the ancient capital of Scotia. Thereafter, says the historian of *Scotland Under Her Early Kings*, the young prince, attended by the civil and ecclesiastical magnates of the land, clad in his royal robes, and bearing in his hands the crown and sceptre, went

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in procession to the ancient Stone of Destiny, on which, covered for the occasion with a cloth of gold, he was set, and from which he swore, *more Scotorum*, to observe the laws and customs of the land, to administer justice, and otherwise to comport himself as a King of Scots should do, this, the native or Celtic part of the ceremonies, being brought to an end by the Chief Poet of the Scots, who, clad in a scarlet robe (the emblem of his order), recited in "the mother (that is, the national) tongue the royal genealogy."

After the conclusion of the Wars of Independence the situation of the two polities spoken of, relatively to one another, was altered somewhat; and at the royal court also some changes of moment occurred, the principal of these being that in course of time the Germanic dialect spoken in the Lothians came to supersede the Norman-French which at one time had been the principal tongue used at Court. It is impossible to determine the exact period of this latter change; but that it was one of the immediate consequences of the wars with the English touching the succession to the Crown seems probable enough.

With regard now to the matter first mentioned, it is certain that the particular favour shown by the later sovereigns of the Atholl dynasty to the feudal polity, and to feudal manners and customs generally, worked in time that effect as regards the native or Celtic polity, and Celtic manners and customs, which it was designed, as well as fit, to produce in such circumstances. Little by little, the feudal polity was diffused through the Scottish provinces, to the prejudice and hurt of the native or Celtic polity, which was thus obliged to give way in some districts of the country before the other. It is said that in the time of Robert the Bruce a parliament whose

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proceedings were conducted in the native tongue was held at Ardchattan in Argyll, at which the Chief of the MacDougalls, the principal opponent of Bruce in that part of Scotland, was declared forfeit, and banished. The event is probable enough; but the feudal terms employed to record it are unfortunate. We may be sure that no parliament was held in Argyll by Bruce or, indeed, any one else in those times; nor is the expression "forfeit" a whit more like to be accurate. What probably happened on the occasion mentioned is that a grand Celtic *concilium* was held at Ardchattan, a place of importance in the west, and that in the course of the proceedings which then took place MacDougall was "put to the horn," to use an old Scots legal phrase, banished the country, that is to say. Naturally, the language used at this *concilium* would be Gaelic, and such record as was made of it in the same tongue.

It is certain that so long as the Lordship of the Isles¹ endured, the Celtic polity continued to be practised in the west of Scotland, and further that here was erected and long sustained a sufficient bulwark of defence against the encroachments of feudalism; but, then, this occurred not only in the country mentioned, but in other parts of the realm also. However, when, as happened towards the close of the fifteenth century, the lordship spoken of fell, at the instance of the Crown, which was then, and had long been, at feud with it, a period of anarchy in parts of the west followed the event, and then it happened that the Celtic polity, deprived of its principal seat of authority in Scotland, began to disappear, little by little.

Still, that the same polity continued to be practised in

¹ In Gaelic: *Buachailleachd nan Eilean*, which means the Protectorship, not Lordship, of the Isles.

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some parts of the country, that is, in the isles as well as in parts of the mainland adjacent to them, despite the fall of the Lordship of the Isles, is proved by existing records of the deposition from power of sundry chiefs of clans, and the elections of others to it, in their room, which depositions and elections could not have taken place had the law of these districts been, not Celtic, but feudal, by nature. In fine, it is probable that the Celtic polity did not disappear entirely from the west till about the first quarter of the eighteenth century; for on the occasion of the Jacobite rising of 1715, a part of the army that fought against Argyll at Sherriffmuir was composed, according to a contemporary witness, of "The Clans," which expression was used very probably to distinguish the tribes in Marr's army that still adhered to the Celtic polity from those, on the other hand, that had become feudalised, that is, who followed hereditary landlords, and not elected chiefs. But, be the truth of this particular matter what it may, sure it is that when the clans again assembled for battle in support of the right to the throne of James VIII, "The Clans" were not then reckoned among the men who marched beneath the banner of Prince Charles Edward.

The removal of the Court from Scone, the ancient capital, to Edinburgh, did much to retard the progress of feudalism in Scotland, though that it should work this particular effect was probably as little anticipated by the makers of the change spoken of as it could have been agreeable to the plain intention of their policy in making it. The change was made because it was thought at the time that since Edinburgh was the capital of the Lothians, the seat in Scotland of the feudal power, therefore Edinburgh should be made the seat of Court and Government,

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to the end that the united powers of both might be used in order to propagate feudalism and feudal manners and customs through the rest of the country, that is, through that greatly larger Scotland which was Celtic Scotland. Actually, however, what fell out was that the strategy employed, instead of shortening the life of Celtic polity and the Gaelic tongue, which was designed, worked, on the contrary, for the prolongation of the life of the native polity; and, in conformity to this effect, to an extension of life in divers parts of the lowlands of the "mother tongue." However, I propose at this conjuncture to descend to some detail touching this latter matter.

When the Queen returned to Scotland in the year mentioned Gaelic was yet the vernacular all through the eastern lowlands. The old royal province of Fife was entirely Gaelic-speaking, and farther north the sway of the same language remained undisturbed. In Perth was some, but not much English, whilst in its immediate, as, of course, in its remoter neighbourhood, nothing was then to be heard save Gaelic. Dundee was in much the same situation in this regard as Perth; and farther north still the whole of Buchan, and, beyond it, the low countries of Moray (even as far as Inverness) were then "under Gaelic." In the city of Aberdeen some English was spoken, but Gaelic for the most part; in the university the same tongue was rife.

The whole of Stirlingshire was Gaelic-speaking at this time; and some was spoken within the immediate neighbourhood of the capital. Southward, Gaelic was spoken generally in Galloway (it survived in certain parts of the province till about the middle of the eighteenth century); and in Ayrshire also Gaelic was widely used.

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As to those extensive districts of country now styled "Highland," these, of course—east, west, north, south, and middling—were entirely Gaelic-speaking. Indeed, save the capital itself, parts of the countries neighbouring it, and the province of Lothian there was not to be found in all broad Scotland at that time any considerable body of spoken English.¹

Still, it would be error to believe that in the Scotland to which the Queen returned in 1561 Celtic polity was conterminous with the Celtic speech. At this distance of time it would be hard to say, taking for guides tradition and such fragments of written information as have descended to us from those times, to what extent the polity mentioned prevailed in Scotland at the period spoken of, though that it was practised yet in the Western Isles and in the remoter countries of the mainland is sure enough. With regard, however, to those parts of the country that lie beyond the hills, I mean to the east of the Grampian Mountains, where Gaelic was still the common speech of the people, as well as Stirlingshire, Dumbarton, Argyll, Moray, Aberdeenshire, and the greatest part of Inverness, I say that in all these countries was no Celtic polity in Mary's time; for now feudal tenure—but not feudal, that is, English, manners and customs—reigned in its room. When in those days it happened that the feudal government at Edinburgh was resolved to expel from its peace some one or other who was obnoxious to it, the usual sentence passed on the offender was banishment "beyond the Spey"; from which

¹ The informations on which the statements printed above are based are collected from a number of sources on which a just dependence can be placed. No single contemporary writing, covering all the facts advanced above, exists, I believe. Some evidence, much later than the Queen's reign, is available, whose effect is to prove that Gaelic was the vernacular of Fife all through the seventeenth century.

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expression we are at liberty to conclude that, no matter what might be their power and standing nearer home, the lords of the feudal government knew well enough that beyond the physical boundary mentioned, they and their law had no real authority, no sure jurisdiction, at least.

The parity of state and situation in respect of polity and language that had existed formerly in Scotland had been disturbed long before the age of Mary Stewart, and at the time of her return to Scotland this was plain enough, but then not in all but only in some of the less considerable, and the more remote, parts of the kingdom. Nevertheless, considered from another point of view, a common phrase, which I think well fits the case, here occurs to me, which is, that no matter how much Celtic polity might be decayed, generally speaking, yet that it was still potentially considerable, "rich in possibilities." In other words, it might yet be re-established generally, provided the contingent ways and means to this end were put to a good use, chief among such contingent ways and means being the great men, chiefs of clans and other nobles, of the Gaelic-speaking districts, or "countries," as they are styled in Scotland. But then the Gaelic nobles, and particularly the more considerable among them, were now used to frequent the feudal Court, where some of them held office in or about it, and where nearly all of them pursued some private interest of their own; so that at the time of the Queen's return to Scotland there was not one of them but was in a very peculiar sense more feudal baron than native chief. They might speak Gaelic well enough, wear tartan trews, and otherwise comport themselves at home and abroad as natives of the soil of *Scotia* proper, but since it was not Celtic but feudal polity that prevailed

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in the different countries ruled by these men, they were not, strictly speaking, *fior-Ghaidheil* (true Gaels) but *leth-Ghaidheil* (half-Gaels), and being such they were a source of weakness rather than a fount of strength to the cause of the old national polity. And thus it happened that what with Gaelic chiefs who wished, and sought, to sit on the two stools of Celticism and feudalism at one and the same time; and what with large districts of country (as well highland as lowland) inhabited by Gaelic-speaking people who knew nothing of Celtic polity, but acknowledged feudal law and held the lands they farmed by feudal tenure, it must be allowed that the drawbacks, disabilities, difficulties and inconveniences conjoined with the "possibilities" spoken of above were considerable as well in number as in weight. Further, they were made yet more formidable than there was as it were a strict need for them to be, by reason of the feuds and jealousies that divided the Gaelic nobles at the time, and kept them from all true concert with one another, and unity of action in the political field; in addition to which, not one of the great Gaelic nobles who frequented the Court of Holyrood at the time glanced at seems to have been in any way gifted above the common.

On the other hand, the state and situation of the feudal Crown and government at the time were in little, if any, better case: indeed it would seem that if these two institutions had sought to control the whole country, they would have fared worse than the others. Now and then in the near, if not in the immediate, past of the kingdom the Crown might seem to be the Crown of the whole country, instead of the royal authority being restricted to a particular part of it, which was usually the

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case. This happened in the reign of James IV, the popularity of whose rule and person enabled him to pass—as well abroad as at home—for a real father to his whole people, for a true King of Scots. However, on the whole the race of these Kings of Sunshine cut no great figure in feudal Scotland; for ordinarily the Crown was the sport of rival factions; and government so little real that almost might it be said with truth that it existed not save in name.¹ The nobles warred continuously against the first, and would no doubt have fought the second, too, if the rising in arms against a shadow had seemed to them a fit military exercise. The general historians of the country blame the nobles severely on account of the wars and rebellions which they raised against the Crown, and the different acts of treason and treachery to their country of which they were guilty in the course of them; and surely the censure which the nobles there receive, they deserve, if not quite as much and often as it is applied to them by these writers yet too often for their good name with posterity. But shameful though the conduct of the nobles was on many occasions, gross and scandalous though their political practices were, yet in casting up the sum total of the crimes and misdemeanours committed by them in a long tract of time, we should do well to remember the provocation which they received on many occasions, particularly from the feudal kings, who ever strove to engross power to themselves, and to enlarge the authority of the Crown

¹ Executively, in Scotland hardly was there feudal government at any time. On the occasion of the murders at Keppoch in the second half of the seventeenth century the Crown was appealed to first, but this proving impotent, the Celtic arm interposed and the criminals were suitably punished. There was really no sound structure of feudal government in Scotland, but in its room a theory of rule that took its rise from the Crown, which itself was dependent on feudal levies for such slender and precarious executive power as it had.

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at the expense of nobles and commons alike. In this matter then, all the virtue was not on one side, nor yet all the contrary on the other, by any means. Besides, there was the tradition, which was ever strong among the native nobility, to the effect that the Crown must be opposed, and if possible prevented, as often as it might seek to usurp the rights of the *tuath*, that is the tribes in general, so as, by means of oppressing and plundering the subjects of their rights and privileges to enlarge its own authority. Further, the war of religion that took place in Scotland during the Regency of Mary of Lorraine weakened the Crown still more, and, too, brought it into contempt among the sectaries at least, if not in feudal Scotland generally.

The chief object of this brief and necessarily rapid and very imperfect sketch is to generate in the minds of such as may come to read it one or two impressions and one or two beliefs which I think very necessary to be held in order to a proper understanding of the circumstances in which Mary Stewart came to make her entry into the public life of the kingdom. The first of these impressions I will proceed to set forth immediately: it is, that the size of Mary's actual kingdom, that is the area of country in which the royal authority was truly effective, was small relatively to that much larger area of country in which (1) the royal authority was but precariously established, and (2) no acknowledgment whatever was made of it, or submission shown it. The second is, that such feudal government as there was at the time in the kingdom considered as a whole was dependent on the whim and pleasure of the barons, whose military power formed the frame on which was stretched the flimsy canvas of such little real

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government as prevailed in it. The principal belief consequent on the foregoing remarks should be, I imagine, that, besides the feudal polity, there was in Scotland at this time some remains at least of the ancient national polity, and co-existent with it were a culture and a civilization, vastly older and much more extensively practised, which, reckoned in the gross, outweighed and over-extended by a deal feudal, that is to say, English culture, manners and customs.

CHAPTER IV

The State of Religion in Scotland at the Time of the Queen's return to Her Kingdom in the Year 1561

I SUPPOSE there is no doubt that Christian religion was introduced into these isles from Gaul, the road by which most peoples and notions, innovations and imports generally have come to us from time to time, as far back in the latter as history and archaeology can carry us. No doubt, too, some had been introduced formerly by the Romans; but not much, probably, and but precariously, according to all the reliable accounts of these first beginnings. An old MS. quoted by Usher, the *Cursus Gallicanus* introduced by Germanus and Lupus, tells us that this liturgy was at one time in general use in the British Isles, that is to say in the three national churches of it: I mean those of the Picts, the Gaels, and the British or Welsh. What is called by Religious the contemplative life continued long to be practised by the Celtic monks, conformably to what was done in Gaul about the same time.

To condescend to some detail touching this matter is necessary at this conjuncture; since without some such outline in brief hardly shall the general situation of religion in Scotland at the time of the Queen's return to it be apprehended as is necessary. Commonly the fruit, whether good or evil, appears according to the time the seed has been beneath ground, and the depth and nature of the soil among which the roots are spread. But our historians in general do not seem to entertain much of any such homely wisdom. In any event, when they come to discuss in their different narratives the state of religion

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in Scotland at the period mentioned, they go no farther back in history in their search for beginnings than a century or two, if as much; whereas the subject demands that they should go a deal higher, be their account of these early times and transactions never so broken, faint, and brief.

Ailred (a contemporary and one of the King's personal friends) tells us that David found but two or three sees when he succeeded to the throne; but that when death took him from it there were nine of them. He means, of course, in that part of Scotland which acknowledged this king's sway. David was not king of the whole of Scotland; neither were so his immediate predecessors, nor yet his immediate successors, on the throne of *Scotia*, though it is a fashion with the general historians of Scotland to speak of him and the others as though all reigned over the entire country, instead of over but a part of it, and even that precariously enough on occasions, which was what occurred generally.

The monastic system of Church government gave way slowly before the changes whose object was to bring the organisation of the Scottish Church into conformity to western observance and continental usage in regard to these matters; and it will be readily understood that the substitution in Church government of the episcopal see for the monastery, of the bishop for the abbot, was not accomplished without difficulty, nor immediately, nor yet without its leaving in its wake many visible signs of the pre-existence of the dispossessed mode of church rule, and the strength of the grip which this mode had established, in the course of ages, on the religious sense and customs of the country. Among these religious survivals into altered times, a principal

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was the Termon Lands, that is to say Church lands consisting of a part of the original gift of land to the monastery of the district, such a part, too, as the donor (who, speaking generally, was the ruler of the country in which the monastery was situated) maintained an interest in, and transmitted by way of right to his descendants. As the monastic Church declined in credit and power, so increased in strength the grip on the Termon Lands of the lay-families associated in this way to the monasteries. And as the grip spoken of increased in strength, in the same ratio declined the spiritual efficiency of the Church, and to some extent even the standards of Christian faith and doctrine established by the Celtic monks of old. "The Gaelic Church" (says Robertson) "had varied widely from its original form and spirit when it presented to the astonished eyes of the dignified prelates of the Roman Church in the twelfth century a picture in which the abuses (lay) of encroachment and neglect had left but the shadow of a long-forgotten system of Church government. The greater abbacies had become the hereditary appanages of powerful families, where they were not still the objects of bloody contention; and the leading members of the septs, who filled the office of abbot, had sometimes ceased even to be in holy orders." On the other hand, it should be remembered that the declining state of the native Church at this period of its history was not due entirely to abuses that took their rise from lay interference with its governance, and usurpations on the rights, duties and privileges of churchmen that had their origin in the institution of the Termon lands; for apart altogether from the abuses and scandals so generated, there had now invaded a part of the body of the Church

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a spirit of gain and worldliness that was entirely foreign to that of its first institution, and in time brought about its supersession. "The vast communities of monks," says the same historian from whom I have quoted already, "that Eastern peculiarity which formed so prominent a feature of the Gaelic Church in her best days, had dwindled into small bodies of Culdees, the representatives of the clerical (that is officiating) portion of the brotherhood . . . who were frequently as remarkable for the amount of their private wealth as their predecessors in the times of Columba and Aidan had been renowned for their disinterested reluctance to acquire property of any description."

The true period of the end of the Celtic or native Church is fixed for us by the disappearance of the Culdees from the religious life of Scotland; but it is necessary to bear well in mind that some of the abuses and scandals that marked the later period of the Celtic system of Church government did not end with it, but on the contrary passed into the body of its successor in the religious life of the nation, that is to say the feudal Church, the Church of David, and that of all the kings of Scotland subsequent to him. For this unhappy result two capital causes were responsible, both which shall be briefly touched at this conjuncture.

The first of these causes was of a psychological nature. The native system of Church government preserved its ascendancy in the imagination and in the affections of the people long after the occurrence of the change that brought about the supersession of the Celtic, in favour of the feudal, Church. In Scotland it was ever the abbey, rather than the cathedral church, that formed the visible centre of the religious life of the community;

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and this national preference for the monastery as opposed to the parochial church, considered here as the type and symbol of ecclesiastical governance, expressed itself in feudal times by means of stone and lime, that is, in a great wealth of abbey-building; for it was in the abbey churches rather than in the cathedral chairs that the pride and glory of Scottish ecclesiastical architecture found their best and most characteristic expression in later times.

In short, the task of grafting the episcopal see and the diocese on to the tribal monastery and the Celtic province seems not to have proceeded at all according to the strict intention of those who (whether laymen or ecclesiastics) designed the great change spoken of. For if they designed—which seems probable enough—an entire fusion of the old with the new system of Church government, so as to bring about in course of time a complete identity of nature in respect of Church and State—I say that if this was indeed their design it is true to say that they failed to effect it, save partially, and to appearance alone, in either of the provinces named. Ancient custom, national habit, and sentiment conjoined with the powers of tradition proved too strong for them in the event. But then what they did succeed in bringing about, so far as the ecclesiastical province was concerned, was an incompatibility of temper in respect of the old and the new mode of Church government, an abiding sense of unease and discomfort such as he is apt to experience who wears another man's clothes; and this, too, worked much harm to the cause of religion in Scotland. In fine, as in the civil sphere, the innovations of David were followed by a long period of social unrest and national disunity, culminating in the

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partition of the country into "Highlands" and "Lowlands"—political distinctions that had no existence whatever previous to the introduction of the feudal system—so also in the religious and ecclesiastical province the attempt to graft feudalism on to the pre-existing mode of Church government worked effects as to religion that were no less injurious to the latter cause than were the others as regards that of the civil peace and prosperity of the realm and national unity. No doubt, had the innovations of David proceeded strictly according to the plan of them; had the line of Atholl not failed in the person of the Maid of Norway; and, thirdly, had not the long and bloody War of Independence to which the event spoken of gave rise, taken place, in these events, affairs, as well in Church as State, might have gone very differently, and the scheme of substituting feudalism for the native polity might have been consummated, as early probably as the age of Robert the Bruce; but since history in Scottish shape took a very different turn, and so tells a very different tale, after the death of the third Alexander, by consequence a state of affairs arose in respect of Church and State whose effect was to embarrass and retard the progress, in both these directions, of the innovations glanced at, thus widening and deepening, instead of bridging (as doubtless was intended) the gulf between ancient custom and the feudal system. In this unhappy state and posture of affairs were Church and State in Scotland at the time of Mary Stewart's accession to the throne.

But besides these grave disabilities, which pressed equally on Church and State, and took their rise from the old feud between native polity and feudal innovation, we are to reckon, so far as the former was

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concerned, the evil inheritance of the Termon Lands. If the ecclesiastical innovations made by David, or set on foot at his instigation, had worked the effect of freeing the native Church of the incubus of lay interference in respect of the administration of her temporal patrimony, the result mentioned would have been good and acceptable reform indeed. But it happened unfortunately that neither at this time, nor yet at any later period of history was the feudal crown strong enough—though it wished it—to protect the interests of the feudal Church in this particular way. A long series of scrambles among the nobility for Church lands; nepotism; simony, the elevation to episcopal sees of persons whose qualifications to fill them to the good of religion and the credit of the country were of the slenderest sort or non-existent, and other kinds of abuse, and misrule generally—such then were some of the melancholy consequences of the retention of the institution mentioned; and it was this and other grave causes of a like nature that in the sixteenth century of our era brought about the collapse of religion in Scotland, rather than the strength of the polemic employed against the Church by the reformers, or the superiority of their spiritual and intellectual parts to those of their antagonists, the Catholic clergy.

A charitable estimate touching the motives of those nobles who, shortly before the Queen's return to Scotland in the year 1561, had engaged openly with the sectaries and posturing as "Lords of the Congregation" had appeared in arms against the Crown would be, that probably not above two or three out of the entire band were at heart Calvinists. There can be no reasonable doubt that most of these nobles rose in arms with the

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sectaries, and made of religion an excuse for their rebellion, in order that, like their kind in France, they might enrich themselves by plundering the Church, and especially by laying hands on lands owned by the Church. Probably most of these nobles regarded the cause to which they gave so great lip-service much as did Lethington and others of that rump, whose habit was to preserve a detached air and a cool and critical attitude with regard to the "godly proceedings" of Knox and his fellow church-burners and priest-baiters, which is proved in some sort I imagine by what fell out in Parliament when Knox thought to obtain for his preachers some of the plunder of the Church with which these same zealots of religious reform had enriched themselves. But it appears that the Lords of the Congregation were little inclined to support his starving, and for the most part illiterate clergy, at their expense at least. Accordingly, they rejected immediately Knox and his project; and if they did not actually laugh in his face when they came to do so, it was not for fear of the preacher or out of respect for his followers that they so restrained themselves on this occasion.

It is said by some who have made a long and intensive study of this particular period of European history, and whose learning and judgment are worthy of every respect, that in no other kingdom of Europe at the time was the state of religion in worse case than it was so in Scotland in the sixteenth century, with the exception perhaps of Italy. I can well believe it; for though there might be sense and truth, as well as true Christian charity, in the remark passed by James V to some who importuned him to follow in his own realm the example set him by his uncle in another, and so plunder the Church, that,

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“though some [meaning his clergy] might be bad, yet God forbid that he should think them all so,” yet without a doubt Scottish history presents a stained and dis-creditable page at this conjuncture. The state of the Church and religion could scarce have been worse than both were at this time. The former was eaten up with trafficking and dissolute priests, idle and corrupt greater clergy, incompetent, time-serving and poltroon-like bishops, with sloth, ignorance, venality and yet darker sins in horrid abundance generally. It may be thought, perhaps, that the graphic and painful picture of the state of the Scottish Church drawn for the Pope by Henry II of France contains much exaggeration on the author’s part; and, further, that in view of the contemporary condition of the French Church—which was in little better case than that of the Scots from a point of view of the morals, and the spiritual and intellectual parts of the clergy—the royal censor would have done better to apply his caustic to objects nearer home than Scotland. But, be this matter as it will, sure it is that the Scottish Church had been leaning, like some decaying tower, perilously earthwards long before it fell to ground, principally, no doubt, by reason of the number and the weight of its own imperfections.

On the other hand, the more immediate effects, as well civil as religious, of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland have been much exaggerated by different parties and persons, who appear to have sought to do so on a variety of motives but ever with a single aim apparently. I propose to spend a few paragraphs on this head.

The general historians of Scotland have exaggerated the effects spoken of, and also the cause itself of them,

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because their habit is to write from a particular angle, owing to their great preoccupation of mind with feudal Scotland, and to these writers, such debate is creed and habit rolled into one. Besides, they exaggerate of habit because they happen to share the religious faith, and consequently the religious passions and prejudices, of the men who brought about in a part of Scotland the religious change glanced at. But yet another cause of the same result has been, in some instances, though not of course in all, a design on the part of particular historians to compose narrative which they believe, though they may not know it for sure, to be agreeable to fashion in respect to the writing of history, and, to a less extent, to their wish to conform to the notions entertained by the generality of Scotsmen as to the different matters spoken of. These, then, are some of the causes of the sort of history glanced at above; but it must be allowed that perhaps the most considerable of them in the same point of view is the common ignorance of and seeming indifference to early Scottish history, and particularly that part of it which has to do with the innovations of David I, no matter whether these were such as were applied to civil objects or on the other hand were such as were designed to take effect in the religious province. The sort of writer glanced at seems slow to understand, and consequently it is as little forward to impress on its readers, that all Scots history subsequent to the reign mentioned is in some sort the direct effect of previous passages of moment, and further, that the feudal government and Court at Edinburgh existed as late even as Mary's time, as it were on sufferance alone, the military strength of the kingdom being situated then, as had been the case time out of mind, in

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the Gaelic-speaking countries,¹ which were much more populous² at the time, and were geographically larger than the purely feudal districts of the realm.

However, the Queen's partisans also exaggerated, though not in the same way, of course, since they appear to act on a different set of motives. They think, apparently, that the more colour they employ in their narratives, the more they render the Queen an object of compassion, surround her with dangers and difficulties hard to be calculated though ever present and most pressing by nature, the easier it should become to absolve her of the charge that during her actual reign she did little or nothing to succour the cause of religion in Scotland, and to improve the state of the Scottish Church. They surround her with ruffians in Court dress, and crowd her council with fanatics who had no policy apparently but to cross and humiliate her, nor measures either, save to hurl insult and defiance at the Pope. The Reformers they represent as marching triumphantly through the smoking ruins of abbeys and cathedral churches towards the complete destruction of

¹ Such heads of Clans as Argyll and Atholl could bring to the field little armies consisting of any number of men from six to eight thousand respectively; the Confederacy of St. Catt, that is the "Clan Chattan" of history, about five thousand men, and so on throughout the length and breadth of Celtic Scotland. From fifty to sixty thousand men is a moderate estimate, probably, of their total military strength in Queen Mary's time. In 1745 Forbes of Culloden reckoned the gross military strength of the "Highlands"—then much reduced in extent and much less populous than formerly, at above thirty thousand men.

² I read somewhere lately that the stench of Paris in the reign of Francis I could be felt on occasions at the distance of a league or two from the city; and I do not suppose that the breath of Edinburgh was any sweeter at the time. No drainage and the unclean habits of the citizens bred this nuisance, not the extreme populousness of the town itself; for the towns and cities of those days and later were small, infrequent and sparsely peopled, relatively to the monster bee-hives of stone (or rather steel) and lime to-day. In those days, too, it was the country districts that gave law to the towns, and not the latter which dominated the former, which prevails to-day—a reversal of the modern practice and procedure which students of history and politics would do well to bear in mind.

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all religion in Scotland. In fine, so assiduously do these apologists blow up the coal of the Queen's difficulties and exaggerate the risks and the dangers that she ran that it must be a cause of wonder to many who read these sensational and highly coloured accounts, that ever the Queen was suffered by her enemies to pass a single night alive in her palace of Holyrood House, and that for her there could have been positively no moving at all about the realm, save by leave of the fanatics who thus most barbarously oppressed and insulted her. They draw the gloomiest pictures imaginable of the decline of Catholic Faith and practice in the kingdom: the horn of the Sectaries is set on high throughout the land; the few Faithful that remain skulk amid the hills of Caledonia, or seek shelter for themselves in caverns or holes in the ground, like the badger or the fox. The natural, if not the designed, effect of so much mournful representation is to breed in the mind of the reader who is cozened by it a sentiment of profound pity for the Queen, vast admiration of her zeal and courage, and perhaps, if he be a Catholic, a vain, though entirely honourable, wish that he too had lived in those stirring but perilous times, so that he might adventure somewhat at least in behalf of this noble young Queen whose zeal and devotion to the cause of Catholic religion in Scotland were so plainly that of her own undoing.

But others there are who in writings that have descended to us from those times strike with no less vigour and with as sure a hand seemingly a note of utter hopelessness touching the immediate state and prospects of Catholic religion in Scotland at this time. These are Religious who were sent into Scotland from abroad, to the end that they might learn on the spot what might be

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the true situation and posture of affairs touching the article of religion, and such as still professed it. Of these occasional visitors to Scotland at this time perhaps the most celebrated was the Papal Nuncio, Father Nicolas de Gouda of the Society of Jesus, who has left us in narrative form a most interesting account of his experiences in Scotland, and who, too, was received at Holyrood by the Queen, in circumstances, according to the Jesuit, of the greatest difficulty, and most certainly with a prodigious show of secrecy on her part. He does not tell us the name of the port at which he disembarked; but since in the same ship in which he sailed were "heretical Scots," whom he describes as "many in number," the probability is that he landed at Leith, if not at some one other of the neighbouring ports in the Firth of Forth. As soon as he was landed, De Gouda wrote to the Queen seeking of her an audience so that he might make known to her the object of his mission; but she being busy at the time with other matters, he tells us that she kept him waiting "a whole month for a definite answer"; and even when she gave him this "definite answer," she could not devise better for the Pope's Nuncio than that he should be smuggled into the palace at an hour when, the Court being at prayers with Master John Knox, she thought, that for him as for her, the risk of discovery should be least. Accordingly, the Legate sees the Queen, the latter excusing herself to the former by lamenting the necessity she was under of receiving him "with so little ceremony," which, she added, was "owing to the disturbed state of the kingdom." Having read the apostolic brief handed to her by the Nuncio the Queen said that she hoped that "the Supreme Pontiff would have regard

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to her ready will rather than to anything she had actually done since her return," in the preceding year. "To the request that Scottish prelates should be sent to the Council of Trent, her reply was that she would consult the bishops as to the means of accomplishing this, but greatly feared it would be found impracticable." Pressed by de Gouda to "establish a college where she could always have pious and learned priests at hand, and where the young men, on whom the hopes of the country depended, could be trained in the Catholic religion, she replied "in one word that this might come in time, but was impracticable just then, and immediately dismissed us." The Queen, however, before dismissing the Nuncio and his two companions (a Frenchman and a Scot) took occasion to warn him, saying that, though no one would attack him publicly, yet he would do well to keep close to his room, "never to venture out."

However, it appears from the narrative (the full text of which, translated from the Spanish, appears in Forbes-Leith's *Narratives of Scottish Catholics*) that the Nuncio so far at least disregarded the Queen's counsel as to seek an interview with two of the Scots bishops who happened to be in Edinburgh at the time, namely, the Bishop of Ross (a son of the house of Roslin, and President of the Court of Session) and the Bishop of Dunblane. From the first he got nothing but evasions and excuses, the President (that is the Bishop) observing when he was given a letter in which it was written that one from him to the Holy Father would be a suitable thing at this conjuncture, that he "did not like it at all." Next, the Nuncio sought the presence of the Bishop of Dunblane. "I had not seen this prelate" (he writes); "but about eight days afterwards he left for his episcopal

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city, and thinking there could be no danger in his seeing me there, I asked one of his relatives to take me, as it was less than a day's journey. None would have suspected me of being the Pope's Nuncio, for I was disguised as one of the Bishop's servants. He was, however, afraid to see me, for the same reasons as the Bishop of Ross"; and he adds, very pertinently, that "considering that it was from these two bishops, more than any one else, I had looked for some result of my efforts, I foresaw how far I was likely to succeed with the others." However, here is the Nuncio's account of his adventure with the Bishop of Dunblane ("the only prelate I was admitted to speak to in Scotland," he says): "He insisted that I should pass myself off as a banker's clerk come to receive payment of a debt. He hoped thus to prevent his servants finding out who I was, though as he resides in an island somewhere,¹ with no other human habitation near, the danger of discovery did not seem very great. His lordship entertained me at dinner, but on condition that we talked of nothing except money matters all dinner time. Your Reverence [the General of the Jesuits, to whom de Gouda's narrative is addressed] will be at no loss to collect from these particulars how far the cause of religion is likely to be advanced by negotiation with these good men."²

However, elsewhere in the same narrative the Nuncio writes with more severity touching these same "good men." "The bishops keep quietly at home" (he says),

¹ A Priory on an island in the Loch of Menteith, some twenty miles from Dunblane.

² Typical of some of these good shepherds was Robert Stewart, son to John third Earl of Lennox, and subsequently Earl of March. Though apparently never ordained a priest yet he somehow acquired the See of Caithness. In defiance of the opinion of his flock he early turned Protestant. He married, but was divorced, was fond of good cheer and played much at the "goff" (golf). His morals seem to have been as indifferent as those of the household he kept.

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"and in truth are for the most part destitute of all personal qualifications requisite for taking any lead in such stormy times," and in yet another passage he remarks that "preferments [ecclesiastical] are conferred upon children, or other incapable persons, without any care for God's honour and the service of the Church, and very often one such person holds several offices in the same church. For instance, a son of one of the bishops has been appointed to the archdeaconry, and two canonries, in his father's cathedral. Besides which, the lives of priests and clerics are not unfrequently such as to cause grave scandal; an evil increased by the supine indifference and negligence of the bishops themselves. . . . I will not describe the way in which these prelates live, the example they set, or the sort of men they nominate as their successors, only it is hardly surprising if God's flock is eaten up by wolves, while such shepherds as these have charge of it."

It is very observable that over this part of the Nuncio's narrative, as generally, broods an air of reserve and perplexity, as though the writer were conscious that behind the scenes and incidents he describes some strong private motive was at work, whose precise nature was a secret to him, but whose effect in general was to cold-shoulder himself and the mission on which he had been sent.

It is probable that had de Gouda known at the time of his coming to Scotland the nature of the understanding reached at St. Dizier in France between Mary and the Guises on one hand and Moray and his party on the other his eyes would have been opened to the truth of the matter a deal wider than appears to have been the case, judging by what he writes to his Superior touching the Queen and her situation relatively to her

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heretical subjects. "It seems" (he says) "that when she first came to Scotland, the Lords (of the Congregation) cunningly extorted from her a pledge¹ to allow no change in matters of religion until the assembling of parliament, and that till then all was to remain as before her arrival," and on the strength of this belief he exculpates to his Superior the Queen, making her out to be little better than a puppet in the hands of designing men, but ever full of piety, good intention, and hidden zeal for the cause of Catholic religion in Scotland, though at the same time utterly powerless to effect anything to purpose in behalf of either. But I propose now to leave this topic for a while, and to proceed instead to learn from the Jesuit's narrative in what particular light he viewed Catholic prospects generally in Scotland at the time of her visit to the Kingdom.

"There are still" (he says) "large numbers of Catholics among the people, and even amongst the nobility; whereas the heretics are inferior both in numbers and influence"; and, reverting to the same matter, he observes in another part of his narrative that "many nobles and earls are Catholics"; and yet again, emphasising the preponderance of the Catholic power in Scotland, he says that, provided the Queen were suitably aided, he has no doubt whatever of the reconversion of the whole realm "to the orthodox faith." Still, the Nuncio is stricken with grief (as he would have had just cause to be had his information been true, instead of for the most part plain exaggerations told him by others in order to serve a particular purpose of their own), at what he regards as the great progress already made by

¹ The pledge spoken of was taken by Mary whilst she was yet in France, so that the Nuncio's informations on this head seem defective.

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the Protestant heresy throughout the kingdom. "The Catholics" (he writes) "are so trampled in the dust by the tyranny of their opponents that they can only sigh and groan, waiting for the deliverance of Israel." All Catholic religion is proscribed. "No religious rite is celebrated in any part of the Kingdom," nor is Mass said publicly save in the Queen's chapel. "The monasteries are nearly all in ruins, some completely destroyed; churches, altars, sanctuaries are overthrown and profaned, the images of Christ and the Saints broken, and lying in the dust. . . . The ministers, as they call them, are either apostate monks or laymen of low rank, and are quite unlearned, being cobblers, shoemakers, or the like, while ministrations consist merely of declamation against the Supreme Pontiff, and the holy sacrifice of the altar, the idolatry of the Mass, worship of images, and invocation of saints. . . . They [the heretics] have superintendents, who diligently visit the churches, drive out by force the legitimate pastors wherever they find any, and not only confirm the wretched people in their errors, but draw away Catholics, and sometimes even priests, from the true religion."

Apart from the presence of one or two obvious contradictions in the passages from the Nuncio's narrative quoted above, I believe that such proofs of exaggeration as they contain are not to be regarded otherwise than as accidental by nature. The Nuncio seems not to have pushed his enquiries much farther afield than Edinburgh and the immediate neighbourhood of the city, throughout the course of his mission, which renders it the more probable that he was principally dependent on the testimony of others touching the matter of the state of Catholic religion in other parts of the country,

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and in Scotland at large. Certainly some there were at the time—persons who were by no means the least considerable among the Queen's subjects—who wished and intended much that he should take away with him from Scotland just those impressions touching the important matters spoken of which (thanks to his narrative) we know that he did indeed communicate not later, but at the time, to the General in Rome of his Order.

De Gouda was a native of Spain, and therefore a stranger and a foreigner within the gates of the country he visited; and being such he was exposed, almost of necessity, to the disabilities and restrictions which the state mentioned is apt to impose on the traveller from foreign parts. No matter how carefully the Nuncio may have primed himself beforehand as to the history and the past and present circumstances generally of the country to which he was accredited, in the capacity mentioned, yet he could not know it as a native should do. Without a doubt he would need to be a fowler indeed who should think to put salt on this or indeed on any other similar Jesuit's tail; for hardly had the choice of de Gouda for Papal Nuncio been made had not his immediate religious Superior, and the General of his Order at Rome, had the utmost confidence in his mental parts, in his wisdom and discretion, in a word in his general fitness for the discharge with success of the important and difficult mission on which he was sent; and certainly the Jesuit's letter to the first of these two dignitaries bears out to the full these so reasonable presumptions in his regard. Still, I explain the existence in his narrative of such contradictions, omissions, errors, and discrepancies as, on a just examination of it, it will be found to contain on the grounds I mention; and these taken together or even

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considered separately, are sufficient, I imagine, to account for the apparent failure of his mission. I set first de Gouda's inability to speak the dialect then in use in feudal Scotland; second, the very slender help he seems to have received from those of whom he had every right and reason to expect it to the full; and third, the plain cold-shouldering done him and his mission by the Queen and her friends at the Court of Holyrood. In fine, my belief is—and I take de Gouda's letter for a witness to the reasonableness of the presumption—that if ever in history the bearer of an important mission was designedly and carefully shepherded off the premises of it by persons and parties that were at least so far interested in it as to resolve to bring it to naught, that mission, I think, was de Gouda's, and the bearer of that mission the Jesuit named. When in the year 1579,¹ Father John Hay, who also was of the Society of Jesus, entered Scotland from overseas on a mission, he at least seems to have found there some churches that were not yet cast down by the heretics, and some Catholics, too, who were not yet humbled by them to the dust. "As soon as my arrival in the north was known (he writes), the people showed extraordinary anxiety to hear me preach, and not unfrequently there were larger numbers assembled in the churches of the neighbourhood than had been known within the memory of any one living, many persons coming two days' journey on purpose" to hear this Father, who was reputed a man of great piety and learning and was a practised and eloquent preacher besides.

The marks of destruction left by the storm are perhaps the best guide that can be as to its violence, its

¹ That is, of course, after the Queen's desertion of the kingdom—near ten years after it.

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extent, and its course. One, Sir Walter Lindsay of Balgawies by name, who was very forward in the Catholic cause and interest about the end of the sixteenth century, testifies in a memorial written by him and preserved at Blairs College near Aberdeen, that "in general, the inhabitants of the towns and maritime districts hold heretical opinions," thus leaving it to be understood that the inhabitants of the country districts generally were yet of a different mind and complexion as regards matters of religious faith. In any event this information—true enough no doubt *circa* 1590—was not so, in a like degree at least, at the period of the Queen's return to Scotland, nor yet was it true of the years that followed immediately the event spoken of. The Act of 1560—null and void from the first, according to the feudal law—which proposed the entire abolition of all Catholic religion in Scotland, was a dead letter at the time, and long remained so, so far as the greatest part of the kingdom was concerned, but a partial observance of it being rendered in the capital itself as in the towns and villages, scattered along the eastern seaboard, from which had sallied in the time of Mary of Lorraine, bands of fanatics, agog to plunder and destroy the neighbouring monasteries and cathedral churches. The rest of the country long remained entirely indifferent to, and unaffected by, the ukase decreed by the federated Calvinists of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood.

The present writer neither denies nor is concerned to deny that in certain districts of country appeared, about this time—that is to say, 1560—certain chiefs of clans, who, shaky already in the matter of religious faith and often corrupt in their morals, took advantage of the pretended Act named, their own inclination to plunder

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and the troubles of the times, in order to filch land from the Church, and drive out clergy from their benefices; still, legion was not the name, though opportunity might be the occasion, of these shabby fellows, whose ill example was not followed, but on the contrary, shunned as hateful, by their Catholic neighbours, who in some instances retaliated on them and chased them from their countries. Argyll, who was the first of the native nobility to change his religious coat, and was probably the only one of them to do so for strict reasons of conscience, was not followed in this respect by any considerable number of the gentlemen of his clan, who for the most part, together with their families and dependents continued to practise the religion of their ancestors. "Before the '45," says Professor Alexander MacBain in a note to a passage in Skene's *Highlanders*, an edition of which he prepared for the press, "the highlanders were, from a religious standpoint, neither good Episcopalians nor Presbyterians at all. Indeed they resisted Presbyterianism.¹ A religious revival rose in the last half of the eighteenth century, and spread slowly all over the north, which assured the success of Presbytery."

¹ He is here speaking generally, of course. He knew well that there were Presbyterians among such clans as the Grants and Mackays, whose chiefs early turned Calvinist, and were followed into that creed by many of their clansmen. In Scotland church and school have ever gone together. In 1758 it was reported to the General Assembly of the Kirk (Protestant) of Scotland that no fewer than 175 country parishes were yet without schools and consequently churches to them. "The people of the diocese [Caithness] were never enamoured of changes in the form of ecclesiastical government. . . . It was so in regard to Roman Catholicism, to which the people adhered even after many of the clergy had conformed to Protestantism, which, however, received little encouragement from the country families. Neither the eleventh nor twelfth Earls of Sutherland were friendly to the Reformation and the Privy Council Register records the fact that they were at different times compelled to find caution in consequence of their religious views." (*Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. XXVIII, p. 263.) There is extant a mass of material whose gross effect is proof positive and incontrovertible that for many years after it was set on foot at Edinburgh, the greatest part of the country paid but slender, if any, heed to the Protestant Reformation.

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Dr. MacBain did well to emphasise the fact of the late appearance of Calvinism in the highlands of Scotland; but at the same time I think that he would have done a deal better to make his note somewhat more comprehensive of the subject of it. Episcopalianism did not begin to enter the Highlands till near forty years after the passing of the Act of 1560, nor did it then, and neither has it since, cut much figure in those parts, or indeed anywhere else in Scotland. It was Catholic clans principally that rose in arms in support of the later Stewarts; but as to the epoch of the Queen's reign, I repeat that in her time Episcopalianism had not yet entered the Gaelic-speaking parts of the kingdom be-north the Forth, and but little Calvinism either, apart from a few coastal towns and districts; whereas the old religion was everywhere, no matter now languishing might be its state, and spiritless and inept its principal leaders among the laity. The efforts of the feudal government to put down "rebels and Papists" in the highlands and isles are a familiar subject to every student of Scottish history who has been at the pains to examine the different Acts of Parliament relating to that matter which were passed in the reign of James VI and those, too, of his successors in line on the throne of the Scots, the number, violence of language, and frequency of these instruments testifying at once to the feebleness of the feudal power in a large part of Scotland at the period glanced at, and the dislike of the Gael for the religion of the Gall.

Further, how feeble still was the arm of the feudal law, within even the immediate neighbourhood of its own seat of authority at Edinburgh, may be collected, with some amusement, perhaps, though with little surprise and less edification, from an anecdote related of

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James VI by that same Balgawies from whose text I have quoted already. It appears, then, that when on one occasion the laird mentioned refused "to submit to laws put in force by heretical judges," he was put to the horn, that is, outlawed. Whereupon the preachers and ministers, gathering together, laid siege to the King's ear to the end that the Crown might issue a writ, so as to enable its officers to lay the other by the heels for a traitor, and an excommunicated person. But the King, not daring to do as the ministers importuned him, but knowing full well the Crown's and the executive's impotency, gave the clerics instead "a blank warrant," telling them at the same time that now on them lay the responsibility of finding "some person to execute it," a manoeuvre on the King's part which the laird thinks it necessary to explain by adding: "We should here remark that the Scots, especially the nobles, are used to act in concert, so that every one sides with his family; consequently an offence given to a member of a family is resented by the whole of his house; and in cases of bloodshed, vengeance is not confined to the guilty person, but involves the whole family and lineage of the transgressor." In any event, the laird got off scatheless, thanks to the powerlessness of the feudal law to apprehend him.

On the whole matter, then, it appears that though religion in Scotland when the Queen returned to it in 1561 was, generally speaking, in a state worse by far than any that had preceded it in a point of view of time, yet that there was still enough, and in a sense to spare, of Catholicism in the country to overturn with ease the medley of lame doctrine and unpatriotic practice that passed for religion with the multitude of the Reformers, provided that the Catholics, and particularly

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the Queen, could be brought to act with promptness, concert, decision, and spirit in order to the end spoken of. A crisis such as that which then confronted Scotland needed, if it were to be surmounted with success, a policy and conduct on the part of the ruler of the nation that was exposed to this crisis superior in every way to those which the Queen and her councils offered it at this conjuncture. The reservations and punctilios, the subterfuges, the circumlocutions and the chicane inherent in the policy laid by the Queen and the Guises at St. Dizier were fatal as well to the cause of religion in Scotland as to that of the civil independence of the country; and conduct designed to advance the ends of this policy, and whose spirit was in conformity to these doubtful ends, which was all that the Queen appeared to offer at this conjuncture, was no less fatal, having regard to the immediate and pressing needs of the two grand causes mentioned.

CHAPTER V

The Queen's Campaign against Huntly

COMMUNING with himself in the third chapter to the fifth book of his *History of Scotland*, the author of it, the late Mr. Hume Brown, thinks it singular "that in spite of all the forces that threatened civil convulsions, the first four years after the return of Mary Stewart were among the most tranquil in the annals of the country. It is to the last three years of her reign that those sensational events belong which have made her one of the tragic and interesting figures of history." What, then, was the Queen about during the first four years of her brief reign of seven in all in Scotland? If the reply to this question be that she was then busy concerting measures in order to the good of religion in her native country, I observe that this appears little, either by what she told de Gouda to tell the Pope, or by her own actions afterwards. But if it be supposed that during these same four years of peace and plenty her principal concern as her chief employment was attending to the claims on her time and talent of the policy adopted at St. Dizier, in that event the reply would be a deal more plausible. However, Mr. Hume Brown is mistaken, or he forgets momentarily at least, when he compares the first four years of Mary's reign to similar periods of peace, if not plenty, in the national annals; for in the year 1562, that is, but a year after she was returned home, a quarrel of some violence between herself and her half-brother, now Earl of Moray, on one hand, and, on the other, Huntly and the Gordons generally, broke out; and since the quarrel mentioned worked a very considerable effect with regard to the

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Queen's later fortunes, I propose to discuss it in some detail at this conjuncture.

In the first place, then, it may be well to determine what manner of man might be this particular Huntly, who was so unfortunate as to draw down on himself, and his whole name, the Queen's displeasure, and who perished in the conflict to which the quarrel spoken of gave rise.

George, fourth Earl of Huntly, was the original "Cock of the North"; he was much the most considerable feudal baron in that part of the country wherein he had large landed estates, not only in the neighbourhood of his own castle, which was in the shire of Banff, but also in others, particularly in Inverness-shire, where by virtue of a grant from the Crown, he held extensive lands. He held also, on the same tenure—that is to say, a grant from the Crown—the lands of the Earldom of Moray, though the title itself (which was superior in antiquity to that of Huntly) was withheld from him. However, that he aspired to it, and thought to persuade the Crown to grant it to him, is no secret of history.

As I have hinted already, Huntly's own lands lay principally in the shires of Banff and Aberdeen, where was also the principal military strength of his name. As to the lands which he held in the county of Inverness, these he and some of his forefathers had acquired by virtue of acting as agents of the Crown in those parts; that is to say, by means of suppressing clans that were obnoxious to the feudal government, and thereafter confiscating the lands of these clans to themselves. Still, the Earl's power in the part of Scotland glanced at was more nominal than real, being, indeed, contingent on certain circumstances. The clans of the confiscated lands might rise in arms with him at his word of command, or they

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might refuse to honour his commands, which they sometimes did; since they preferred to obey their own chiefs rather than to follow the standard of their feudal overlord, for such was his quality in their respect in those parts. In fine, the eminence from whose summit the "Cock of the North" was used to crow loudly in the north, if not through all broad Scotland, was a feudal fief rather than a native *duthchas*, that is, a clan territory, though when the Earl was able to raise the whole of the military array prescribed to him by charter his power appeared formidable indeed.

As to the person of the Earl of Huntly, it appears that at the time of his adventure with the Queen and Moray, he was grown somewhat corpulent; but in his younger days he had been a fair knight, well shaped, handsome of face, very active in the field, where he showed some military talent. He was a Catholic; but his reputation in this respect did not stand high with his contemporaries, nor is history any kinder to it. In short, he was somewhat of a trimmer as regards the article of religion. He appeared with Protestants; but, next, changing his coat, or at least revising his principles in the light, very probably, of his interest, he acted as openly with the Catholics. It was commonly said of him at the time that he was like sand, which, cast among them, may disorder wheels, but is poor foundation to build on. As we turn the leaves of that part of the general history of Europe which tells the tale of the sixteenth century sometimes there appear to us, in the form of illustrations to the text, countenances which seem to wear a perhaps indefinable, but yet unmistakable, sixteenth-century look—crafty, sombre faces of men and women, full of intelligence, but yet at the same time

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not a little unprepossessing, as befits an age which if it be not the most brilliant of all that have occurred since our era began, yet is by no means the most, and may well be the least, righteous of them. In this gallery of portraits Huntly appears, and with an air about him that gives one the impression that he, too, was well timed.

The apparent cause of the quarrel between the Queen and Huntly was some defiance of the royal authority shown by the Earl's second son, the Laird of Findlater, whose cause, however, he supported, if not overtly yet indirectly, and much under the rose, as it were. Highly incensed with the Earl, the Queen summoned him to her presence; but, disregarding the command he was subjected to the pains and penalties of outlawry, which so incensed, or it may be alarmed, him in his turn, that he took up arms against the Crown. Setting himself at the head of a body of horse and foot numbering some seven hundred men, he marched towards Aberdeen, where the Queen and Moray then lay, the former being in the course of a royal progress to the north of Scotland at the time. Huntly's little army was attacked on a hill-side at a place called Corrichie near the township of Banchory, by Moray and Atholl, who with two thousand men under them, defeated their enemy, killed two of Huntly's sons, and took the Earl himself prisoner. However, as he was being conducted from the field, the captive "Cock of the North" fell lifeless from his horse, poisoned (by Moray), say some, but stricken suddenly by a mortal disease, affirm others who, mindful of Huntly's gross bulk, rather than attentive to the voice of tradition, prefer on this occasion at least probability to romance.

Such, then, in as small a compass as I can well press the matter into, was this strange affair of the Queen's

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quarrel with Huntly, and such, too, the tragic end of it, so far as the Gordons were concerned. But as to the matter of the real motive, or rather motives, to it, among the more probable of these were, I imagine, the following: in the first place, there was the matter of the quarrel of the Queen's mother, Mary of Lorraine, with Huntly, who imprisoned him for treason, that is, trafficking with the English; the same who in her last hours on earth spoke much against the Earl, saying that he was one in whom no reliance could be had, or trust reposed. Mary no doubt knew well these things—the way that Huntly had acted the while her mother was alive, and her mother's opinion of him, all which things, joining themselves in her heart to those feelings of jealousy and sentiments of hostility, with which the nobility in general and the great lords in particular, were regarded by the feudal Crown, were sufficient, I suppose, to set the Queen against Huntly long before he moved hand or foot in armed rebellion against her. Further to this matter, it happened that the Earl had a mad son who, presuming to fall as madly in love with the Queen, was silly enough to vow that he would marry her by force, though he was sane enough to understand that his suit, which was most unwelcome to Mary, was entirely hopeless from the first. And this circumstance, joined to the knowledge which the Queen had that Huntly himself was reputed to be more than a little partial to his own pretensions in her regard, further embittered the Queen against the "Guid man o' Ghight," and, too, against the whole name and tribe of Gordon.

As to the Queen's half-brother and principal minister of state at the time, he and Huntly had fallen out long before the Queen conferred on the former that earldom

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(of Moray) which the latter very early in his public career seems to have bespoken for himself as a sort of stepping-stone to greater power, and honours higher than those which he enjoyed already; so that when, in the year following the Queen's return to Scotland and the royal raid into the Gordon country, the Lord James Stewart was given the earldom prized by Huntly, then fresh fuel was added, and new heat given, to the old feud between the two men, Moray vowing that he would demand of Huntly the formal possession of the lands of the earldom (which also had been granted him) at the door of the latter's own castle in the north. For his part, Huntly had already angered Moray by vowing in the hearing of some of the latter's friends that he would re-establish the Mass in three northern shires, intending doubtless by this boast that he would apply to those parts of the country a measure of exclusion as regarded the practice of the Protestant religion as absolute as that which prevailed in the south in respect of the ancient religious creed of the country.

But besides these fertile causes of enmity between Huntly and Moray, there was the matter of the Queen, on whose mind it is but reasonable to believe that Moray worked in the other's disfavour, to the end that at her instance he might bring about his enemy's complete disgrace, if not his destruction. As well motives of ambition as some of policy demanded that Moray should drive from the Queen's councils all who might there compete with himself in respect of her esteem and confidence; and though Huntly's reputation in the country, the uniform uncertainty of his public conduct, and the feelings of dislike and distrust with which the Queen regarded him, might unite to render Huntly a deal less formidable than

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he would have been had his merits been as plain as his defects were apparent, still his undoubted great power in the country, the credit of his name, and the strength of his family connections throughout the realm made him potentially, if not positively, dangerous, and therefore a certain cause of Moray's jealousy, and thus a sure object of his bitter enmity.

No sooner was the dead body of Huntly brought to Aberdeen, than the Queen seems to have begun to reflect that after all perhaps she had not done wisely in allowing her royal progress to the north to be turned into an armed scrimmage with Huntly and the Gordons. John Knox, whose notions of writing history appear to have been drawn from the school of Baron Munchausen, says that Huntly's death caused Mary the greatest disquietude of spirit and much despondency of mind, a despondency, he affirms, that endured for some days; and though he is in general very little credible, yet on this occasion the witness spoken of seems acceptable enough. For if Huntly's quarrel with Mary was a blunder, which is precisely as it appears to the eye of history, that of Mary with the other was surely a monument of folly as great as any mountain in the land of Moab. In fine, the Queen and her cause had nothing to gain, but on the other hand a vast deal to lose, by Huntly's death, and the disgracing of the Gordons to which she most imprudently had set her hand; for allowing that Huntly was entirely unreliable, a trimmer, vain-glorious, self-seeking, treacherous and untruthful, yet, after all, he was the undoubted head of the Catholics of the north, to discourage and disoblige whom was apparently the sole visible effect of the Queen's most ill-advised campaign. Considered, therefore, from a point of view of the religious interest

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of the country, the baiting by the Queen of Huntly and the Gordons was bad policy; but presuming—which seems reasonable enough—that at the time glanced at the Queen's mind was not overmuch preoccupied with the cause mentioned, still, judging the same matter in the light afforded by the St. Dizier policy, here again the folly of the Queen's action is plain enough; since what the policy spoken of demanded of her councils was that she must ever stand well with Catholics and Calvinists alike, but that in the event of trouble arising to her from the last then she should lean on the second, since her Catholic subjects were more numerous and powerful and better inclined to her cause and person than the others. But now all, or near all, was spoiled: with her own hand she had brought about a conjuncture of politics which every principle and consideration of good policy united to demand that she should avoid as far as might be. Small wonder, then, that at Aberdeen the Queen was observed to be downcast and troubled of mind, so much so indeed that she continued in this state for some days after the ostensible cause of her dejection had occurred. Nor would it be surprising, though we knew it for a fact, that thenceforward, till the day the final rupture came, the Queen's mind with regard to her half-brother was much less favourably disposed towards him than had been the case without a doubt before the trouble with the Gordons arose, and the death of Huntly occurred.¹

¹ The true significance of the duel between Huntly and Lord James Stewart for the hand (and the lands) of the Earldom of Moray seems to have escaped entirely the attention of the general historians of Scotland. For my part, I think that as the latter planned to use this dignity for a stepping-stone to the Crown, so likewise the former also planned; but that there was this difference, between the two schemes—that is, that Huntly (as Moray) aspired to the Crown *via* a marriage with the Queen; whereas the other (as Moray) designed but to use her so long as she might be useful to him and then to cast her aside. The following *Note* as to the earlier "Earldom" of Moray is intended to show the strength of the sentimental and historic connection between the Celtic and the feudal "honour."

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A BRIEF NOTE AS TO THE ANCIENT "EARLDOM" OF MORAY.

The history of Scotland opens with Alba or Pictland, divided into two political parts, that is, the northern and the southern Picts. However, in the year of our Lord 843, Kenneth MacAlpin, a Scot or Irish Gael on his father's, but very probably a Pict on his mother's side, succeeded to the throne-in-chief of the southern Picts. By some he is thought to have conquered all Pictland, establishing on the ruins of the Pictish state a purely Scotie monarchy; but here is fable drawn from the chroniclers who, then or later, wrote in the interest of this king's family. Kenneth and his immediate successors of line styled themselves, and were commonly known as "Kings of Picts," not Kings of Scots; and this, it is plain, would not have happened had Kenneth conquered (as some allege) southern Pictland, instead of merely succeeding to its throne in the natural course of events. The change from "Pictland" to "Scotland"—or rather *Scotia*—was to come a little later. It came with the accession to the southern throne of Donald MacConstantine (889-900), who was the first of the family of Kenneth MacAlpin to use the style "King of Scotia."

Now an immediate consequence of the succession of Kenneth to the principal chair of the southern Picts was the complete separation of the northern from the southern Picts, a separation that was founded very probably on an objection taken by the former to the acceptance by the latter of Kenneth and his Scots. In any event, two separate kingdoms, which had been confederated formerly, now became independent of one another in a political way, the southern portion of the Pictish dominions coming to be known generally as Scotia (as

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has been remarked already), but the northern part, on the other hand, continued to adhere to the ancient denomination of Alba, though the Irish annalists of the period sometimes refer to the latter as Moray, the name of the principal province of the north.

The political division spoken of endured till the age of MacBeth, who, warring against Duncan, King of Scotia, killed him in battle, or slew him with his own hand whilst Duncan was in hiding after the engagement in which the Moray King (MacBeth) and his allies the "Danes," that is, the Norse of Caithness, had defeated him. Thereupon, the two realms of Alba or Moray and Scotia were united under the rule of MacBeth and his wife, Gruach (Shakespeare's "Lady MacBeth"), who appear in certain religious donations of the time as "King and Queen of Scots." MacBeth, killed in battle by the son (Malcolm III of Scotia) of the Duncan whom he had slain, thereupon succeeded to him the latter's stepson, Lulach, the "simple" or "fatuous" child of Gruach by a former King of Alba or Moray, who was MacBeth's immediate predecessor on that throne. However, Lulach's course on earth was soon run; for he was ambushed and killed by Malcolm, but a few months after his accession. What happened next was that the two kingdoms of North and South Pictland reverted to the pre-Bethian position relatively to each other; and with the coming to pass of this event the first phase of the history of the Kingdom of Moray concludes.

The second needs but very few words in which to describe it, sufficiently for immediate purposes at least. After the death of King Lulach, the succession to the throne of the North opened to his sister's son, Malsnechtan, who died in peaceful possession of the

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realm, according to the Irish annalists, who say, further, that the event last spoken of occurred in the year 1085. To Malsnechtan succeeded his nephew, Angus by name, who, taking advantage of David of Scotia's temporary absence from his kingdom, in the year 1130, invaded, at the head of a considerable army, Scotia; but being met at a place called Strickathow in the country of the Mearns in Angus by the forces of David I, he was there and then defeated and slain. Whereupon, says Orderic Vital, a chronicler of those times, the King (David I), taking advantage of the fact that Moray was now deprived of its lord and master, entered the province and reduced the whole of it to his sway. But here the scribe mistakes, or exaggerates a deal, at least; for what happened on the occasion mentioned was that after Strickathow, David, essaying the whole, was unable to reduce to his arms more than a part of Moray, the rest, that is, the greatest part of it, entirely eluding his grasp. After this, pretender after pretender appeared in the north, each of whom claimed to be of the line of the "Earl" defeated and slain at Strickathow; so that what with wars so occasioned the province, and the troubled nature of the times generally, what was left of the old kingdom of Moray continued to hold out against the Scottish kings till the age of the second Alexander (1214-49), when a complete reduction of it was made, and, by consequence, the whole province annexed to the other possessions of the Scottish Crown.

I have spoken above of "pretenders" who appeared in the North, and who claimed to be "Earls" of Moray; but besides these were other pretenders, who, though Celts also, yet claimed not on a Celtic, but a feudal, ground. For instance, in June 1171 Morgund, Earl of

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Marr, appeared before William I, and demanded his right to the whole Earldom of Moray, in which he alleged that Gillocher, his father, had died vest and seized. Now nothing is known to history touching the earldom of which Morgund alleged that his father, Gillocher, had died vest and seized; nor is this Gillocher himself known to history, though Morgund, Earl of Marr, was flesh and blood right enough; for his name appears in a number of charters of those times. Still, it is possible that, as Morgund affirmed, Gillocher was his father, and also Earl of Moray, as well as Marr; for it may well be that, after the defeat of Angus, the last known King or "Earl" of Moray, David erected into an earldom certain of the lands of Moray, and conferred it on Gillocher, perhaps by way of reward for services rendered him at the battle of Stickathrow. In any event, it is impossible, consistently with a due regard for historical evidence, to dismiss Gillocher and his Earldom of Moray as pure invention on Morgund's part; for a deal later in history, that is, at the time of the dispute that fell out in Scotland touching the succession to the throne, consequent on the death of the Maid of Norway, Donald, then Earl of Marr, appears in a document of the time as one of the "Seven Earls of Scotland" (see Palgrave's *Collections*) who supported Bruce, not in his own name alone, but also in that "of the freemen of Moray," all which certainly seems to give some colour of truth to the claim advanced by Donald's ancestor, Morgund, in 1171.

However, there can be no doubt that a feudal Earldom of Moray was created by King Robert the Bruce in favour of his nephew and comrade in arms, Sir Thomas Randolph; but Randolph dying without lawful issue in 1332, thereupon the earldom reverted to the Crown,

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whose practice it was thereafter to grant it, together with the extensive lands appertaining to it in the north—all which formed a part of the ancient Kingdom of Moray—to princes of the blood royal of Scotland. The title of Moray was yet in the Crown when Mary succeeded her father, James V; but a little later a gift of the lands in wardship was made to Huntly, who, as I have observed already, held them at the time of the Queen's return to Scotland.

It is certain that, shortly before the Queen set out from Holyrood on her progress to the north, a deal of a somewhat odd nature was made at Court, the effect of which was threefold. By this deal Lord James Stewart, who had been previously granted the Earldom of Marr, then like Moray in the Crown, received instead the title and lands of Moray; the right of Lord Erskine to the Earldom of Marr being acknowledged at long last by the Crown; and, thirdly, Huntly was stripped of his wardship in the north and simultaneously of all his hopes and expectations touching the grant to him of the dignity that he coveted. Doubtless the public memory in Scotland touching the old royal associations of Moray was a deal livelier in Mary's day than it is so at the present time; and to this point also due regard should be had. Besides, linked and bound up with these recollections and associations were others of a like nature. I mean the Dukedom of Albany (*Alba* or *Albann*, whence Albany, that is Moray) whose last holder, Murdoch, James I caused to be beheaded in 1425, very probably on the ground that he and his father, the previous duke, had sought to usurp the throne. In fine, the shadow cast by Moray athwart the page of Scottish feudal history is ever chilling to the pretensions of the later Scotie Kings.

CHAPTER VI

The English Succession

I CHANCED to see on a bookstall the other day a copy of a work entitled *The Religions of Mankind*, and, taking it in my hand, I took a glance through it; but I was surprised to see in it no reference to what is probably the most common and the most popular of all the different religions professed by mankind either now or at some time or other in the story of our race. I mean the Religion of Might and Majesty of Size, which stirs, and has ever drawn to itself, apparently, more devotion than any one of the others that are described in the book mentioned, with the exception of the worship of money, which also reckons its devotees, not by hundreds of thousand of souls, but by mankind in general. And these two gods of Might and Majesty of Size were joined lately by a third, whose name is Speed, so that a duality of godheads which before the event spoken of was formidable enough, is now become a trinity of powers before which society must bow down, and man in general prostrate himself in adoration more abject than was ever known and practised formerly, if this be possible.

Now it follows from the very nature of the two gods of Might and Majesty of Size that emotional repercussions in metaphysical space proper to their respective godheads must occur very often; and it happens that this is precisely what we find at work at the moment all through society, in respect of every race, type, sort, or complexion of men that is within the common ken, or unknown to this ken, yet is written in the books of the learned. The cult

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glanced at is, and has long been, most certainly much practised in politics, which in some one shape or other form the religion of millions of men; these millions of souls worshipping at the shrine of political Might and Majesty of Size a deal more fervently and continuously than they are apt to adore any other object which ancient custom or tradition, or even the Word of God proposes to their religious understandings. Naturally, too, the two gods mentioned have their priesthood among the politicians, who have founded large monasteries and built to themselves great cathedral churches which are named after illustrious men, such as Cæsar, Alexander, Napoleon, who are to the generality of this order of worshippers what the Saints of God are to such as profess to hold them in perpetual veneration.

It is little to be supposed that the heart of Mary Stewart beat indifferent to the external attractions at least of the creed of Might and Majesty of Size in politics; and, further, that through the channel of the old line *fumum et opes strepitumque Romae*, she imagined to herself a political consequence of temporal power and material greatness, as well as a physical reality, seems probable enough, having regard to what is known of her nature and her whole public career.

As the Queen seems to have had but little science of rule, or understanding of the principles of political "business" in general, it is little likely that she had more than a common knowledge of the history of her own crown. But speaking to the same head, there is excuse for her; for the informations touching the past situation of the Crown, and the origins of the monarchy in Scotland, were in her day of the slenderest, and, in any event, most imperfect. We have no means of knowing the

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precise manner of her instruction in political science, nor do we know the depth to which her knowledge reached in a political way, though, as I have said before in the present work, her notions touching princes and subjects, the duty of the first to the second, and that of the second to the first, would not appear to have risen above what was believed by the generality in her day, and this no doubt throws some light on the subject mentioned.

The first historian of Scotland to put some order and probability, as well as scholarship, into the early history of the country was Father Thomas Innes, whose *Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of Scotland* (published in 1729) scattered to the four red bounds of the learned world a deal of the fable, myth, and legend which before his day had shrouded as with an enchanted mist the first beginnings of the Scottish nation. It is little probable, therefore, that the Queen's information touching the history of her crown, and the origins of monarchy in Scotland, extended very far, or that either of the two subjects mentioned ever gave much employment to her mind, or, if it did, brought her much enlightenment.

We know by the *Tren Law of Free Monarchies* that when her son, James VI, came to essay some early Scots history he cut on this occasion a remarkable rather than a respectable figure. In the work named, the King derives the Scots monarchy from one Fergus, whom he takes from Ireland to Scotland, a land (he says) then entirely uninhabited save by a few savages; and from this foundation he proceeds to reason that "the Kings therefore in Scotland were before any estates or ranks of men within the same; before any Parliaments were holden or laws made"—good enough doctrine, no doubt, for a would-be

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absolute monarch, but very poor conjecture considered historically. And even though the Queen had studied Hector Boece, the most considerable of the feudal historians in Scotland who preceded George Buchanan, her studies would not have derived much benefit from that mass of romance and fable, though she might have learned in the former, if not in the latter, a thing or two touching the early monarchy which should have taught her that there was a time in Scotland when not all the law-giving was the King's, nor yet all power and authority in the country his either. Still, it would be not a little unreasonable, as well as unjust to her, to expect that the Queen should have had learning and information touching the history of the Crown of Scotland which did not exist in feudal Scotland, even in the most rudimentary forms, in her day, or yet for many a day after she was dead.

She was proud of her crown, her country, and her family, and she loved well her people. The Stewarts had faults enough in all conscience; but they were patriotic men and women, even in those few examples of them, whose apparent want of good principle in this respect led some of the subjects to oppose them, on this very ground. As to the rest, probably the Queen accepted her crown, her country, her subjects, and the age she lived in for what they appeared to be to her and others, without going about to make any deep inquiry into matters touching which, it may be, she had little curiosity, and could not have exerted it to much purpose in feudal Scotland at least, though she had it to the full.

The strength of the Queen's claim to the English throne is measured to us exactly by the fact that in the year 1603 her son and successor on that of Scotland

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succeeded to it. But besides the contingent right here glanced at, she had also an immediate right to the same crown, on the presumption of the illegitimacy of birth of Elizabeth Tudor, who, if she was base-born, had plainly no right to the crown she wore. With regard to these two aspects of the matter, Mary Stewart seems to have favoured the latter pretty strongly at one time. Not long after her marriage to the Dauphin of France, and the accession of Elizabeth to the throne of the English, she caused to be engraven on her plate the royal arms of England, adding them to those of France and Scotland. Nowadays, this act on her part which, it must be allowed, was neither discreet nor yet in very good taste, would be styled, I suppose, a "gesture"; and, giving to the word the sense which is often applied to it to-day, it is sufficient to say that Mary's gesture occasioned at the time no end of a stir in the courts of the west. It warned, or seemed to warn them all at least, that the Queen of Scots was "out" for the English crown, and would prosecute her claim to it with French aid. But, death happening to strike Francis almost as soon as he was raised to the throne of the French, and eclipse absolute and complete befalling the political fortunes of the Guises, the authors, probably, of the "gesture" spoken of, the affair blew over in course of time, leaving little behind it, apparently, but a resentful heart or two here and there and a few pieces of gold plate engraved, very imprudently, with the royal arms of England.¹

However, it appears that at St. Dizier it was resolved

¹ To establish in the west a sufficient balance of power to that of Spain had long been a principal object of the French statesmanship. With Mary on the throne of England and Scotland, and France in close alliance with both, the balance spoken of would be brought about. Thus the account of the family of Guise in the pact concluded at St. Dizier is plain as that of their niece the Queen of Scots in the same instrument is so.

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to give an entirely new turn to Mary's relations with Elizabeth Tudor, the new and, as it was hoped at the time, doubtless, happier and all ways more amicable turn spoken of consisting in yet another "gesture" on the former's part, designed to take effect in the same quarter, but, unlike the other, this time friendly by nature instead of the reverse. In short, it was resolved that the Queen of Scots should now pay court to Elizabeth, to the end that she might insinuate herself into the good opinion of the English Queen; but, then, without Mary's letting go her hold on the thread of the main idea, which was, that the Queen of Scots should (if she could) take full advantage, independently altogether of her new relations with the other, of any occasion or conjuncture of circumstances that might occur in such fashion as to favour her cause of the succession of England.

The English Queen, who was now meddling actively in the affairs of the northern kingdom, and whose predecessors on her throne had long been used to act a similar part, and worse, had perhaps little just cause to complain, though the Queen of Scots and her French advisers came to borrow this leaf from the book that tells the tale of the political relations of England with Scotland. Be this matter as it may, what is sure is that from this time forward till the tragedy of Kirk-o'-Field, the Queen of Scots took her diplomatic cue regarding Elizabeth from the policy adopted at St. Dizier, and pressed it ever most perseveringly, as the letters that passed between the two women at and about the time glanced at prove sufficiently.

It sometimes happens in human experience that when we come to explain to others our conduct on a particular occasion, or during a series of conjunctures, we make

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use of motives to it that conspire to conceal from these others, and, it may be, almost from ourselves, the true principles on which we have acted, as well as (and this, too, sometimes happens) to give the reasons which we think will look best in the eyes of others, but at the same time to conceal from others, and perhaps, by a stroke of the imagination, even from ourselves, those less worthy, but as a rule a deal more powerful, motives whose presence in our hearts is the true cause, rather than the others, of our conduct. This is human nature. Scipio Africanus, who was asked why he should take up arms against the Carthaginians, replied that this was a public service which he must needs do his country and his race; and history tells us how gloriously he performed his self-allotted task; nevertheless his true motive to the course named would appear to have been that he feared and hated the Carthaginians, some one of whom had once done him an injury that rankled afterwards much in his breast. There were many good reasons why the Queen of Scots should wish to succeed to the English throne, and I doubt not that had she been asked by any one then about her, to whom she was used to lend an attentive ear, to give her reasons for her wishes in this respect, she would have done so with the greatest alacrity, each reason seeming more plausible than the others, perhaps. In the first place, by succeeding, in accordance with her right, to the throne of England, would she not put an end for ever to the continuous ruinous and sanguinary wars between the two nations; and surely two nations, inhabitants of the same isle, speaking for the most part the same tongue, and observing the same manners and customs, were better by far united under one crown than separated from one another by two as at present? And

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for this reason principally at feud with one another more often than they were in one another's peace? In fine, any reasonably intelligent person could, if invited so to exercise his or her mind, give any number of seeming admirable reasons why the Queen of Scots should yearn to possess the English throne. Still, the Queen would have been scarce human—most certainly not the woman that history reveals to us as Mary Stewart—had she been indifferent to the many worldly gains and advantages that would be hers very probably should she obtain the prize she coveted in the shape of the English succession. Greater power, more might, majesty, pomp and circumstance; increased wealth, more palaces, households, rich clothing, jewels, and finery generally—these, philosophically considered, may be trifles, the vain and perishable goods of this transitory world, and therefore not fit to be so much as named in the august and exalted company of the Ideas. Still, that such things—mean and mundane though they are—have weight with most of us, who love them and wish them for ourselves as dearly, it would be vain—plain hypocrisy—to deny. To herself probably the Queen neither denied the power of attraction which the seeming good things mentioned above exerted in her regard, nor yet disputed the much greater effect which the thinking on them in the gross wrought in her mind as often as she came to ponder them; but that at the same time she was sensible that always to profess to herself and others the higher, but to sink in her heart the no less powerful lower motives to the same end was good policy as well as human nature, is credible enough of Mary Stewart, and, I suppose, credible enough of any one else in similar circumstances.

But be these reasonings, in regard to the Queen and

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the English succession what they may, it is surely little credible that in the course of her communings with herself, or yet in that of her conversations with others on the same head, she took much thought, or showed much concern touching what might befall her throne and country in consequence of a union of the two crowns. She had signed away both in favour of France when, though young and politically inexperienced, no doubt, yet she was old enough to apprehend to the full the meaning of the instrument to which she set her hand, its manifest intention with regard to her crown and country; and so, for my part, I cannot believe that on the occasion now under discussion she was any more forward to show any greater consideration for either. To succeed as soon as ever she might to the English throne was, I suppose, the wish of her heart; she was dazzled by dreams and visions of might and worldly greatness; and, not content with the crown she wore, she aspired to other two, always, no doubt, with the best intentions imaginable, and if not with the purest, yet with entirely respectable, motives at least; but, then, as the event was to prove, so far as she was concerned, without a due sense of the difficulties that lay in her path, and without the knowledge and experience and the strength of character necessary to so formidable and arduous an undertaking.

CHAPTER VII

The Affair of "Davie" the Secretary

THE choice that was made at St. Dizier of Lord James Stewart for the Queen's cicerone and principal minister of State was natural and proper enough, having regard to the circumstances in which the appointment spoken of came to be made. He was united to Mary by ties of blood; and professed on the occasion mentioned the greatest devotion to her person and cause; and though to all appearance he was a completely starched Protestant, positive as could be as to the supreme truth of Reformation principles, yet he was candid or, at least, astute enough to allow that the faction in Scotland to which he belonged formed as yet but an inconsiderable minority of the gross population of the realm, thus giving the Queen and the Guises good cause to believe that he would serve her well, and be faithful to her, since his own cause and interest were seemingly much of a piece with hers.

He was one of the principal figures among the Scottish Calvinists at the time, a rising man in the opinion of many of the sectaries, and popular with such of the commonalty as followed more unthinkingly and recklessly than did most the new religion. He had much political address, but he ever practised more dexterity of manner than he used plainness of speech and honesty of conduct in political life. On serious topics he spoke ever with a becoming gravity of countenance, with a great air of learning, which might or might not mean more than he gave forth on each such occasion, but he could unbend readily enough when so to comport

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himself he thought advantageous to his interest or conformable to the usages of a politer society than that which the company of his friends, the preachers, could afford him. His manner and way of debating political questions of moment suggested to many who heard him that in him lay very considerable reservations of mental power and political address; and he had that useful faculty of joining to his own the experiences of others, and profiting by the juncture, without which there can be no sufficient statesman, or statesmanship either, nor, indeed, any true leadership of causes, men, and parties, either ordinarily or at any critical conjunctures of affairs. In person he resembled somewhat Philip II of Spain, to whose nature, indeed, his own conformed in some degree; but whereas the Spaniard was dilatory, much inclined to circumlocution in a political way, the "Bastard of Scotland," on the other hand, was ever quick to discern the opportunity and quite as alert to seize it.

On the other hand was the Queen, inexperienced as to rule, and by no means favoured in respect to her cause by reason of her sex. Such knowledge of the internal affairs of her country as she had at the time she had collected previously from the advices of others; and though her information as to the matters mentioned might be good enough in an ordinary way of business, yet it is plain that she had not, nor could have yet, humanly speaking, any of that intimacy of knowledge touching the subjects glanced at which can be gained by such as seek it by means of personal experience alone, by means of prolonged and careful study at the very seat of affairs, and therefore is not to be gained through the channel of lectures, lessons, doctrinaire discourses and discussions conducted at a distance, books, treatises, and

so forth, no matter how full and complete to all seeming these sources of information and modes of instruction may be. Thus, to set the Queen under the political wing of her half-brother must seem to many to-day as doubtless so the Guises judged it at the time, that is to say, good enough policy, having regard first to the difficulties under which she and the Guises lay, and, secondly, to the talent, the seeming merits, and rank and station in life of the Protestant envoy, and more particularly, perhaps, to the power of his word and the authority of his example, in the councils of his party in general.

Still, if on the reasoning employed above it should seem that Lord James Stewart was in a manner destined, marked out by fate and fortune, to be the Queen's chief minister and principal friend in Scotland, yet it is no less plain that his account was in this particular disposition of affairs as much at least as was hers. It is freely imputed to him on the part of Bishop Leslie that he had treasonable designs on the Queen's throne, minding to seize it for himself, and to set her aside in the course of the process of making himself king of the country in her room; but independently altogether of the Bishop's witness as to this matter, which some may be inclined to reject as being of too partisan a nature, yet the mass of accusation, as of proof, against him on this head is altogether too strong and circumstantial to allow of its being set aside by any one who has the least regard for the cause of truth in history or the smallest acquaintance with and understanding of the different passages of those times in which he figured more or less prominently, and with advantage to himself, but yet ever more or less secretly. Plainly, then, the nearer to the Queen's person he might be placed, the greater

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and the more complete her confidence in him, and the more perfect the reliance which she might come to set on his friendship and his counsel, the easier should it be for him to work against her that which, having regard to the circumstances of his career, it would be folly to deny that he intended against her. However, the immediate object of his purpose, as the task that now lay nearest to his hand, was plainly to suffer nothing to come to pass in Scotland that might have the ill effect of frightening the Queen and the Guises out of the hands of the Calvinists and into those of the Catholics, a course of action which none knew better than he did at the time would have far from agreeable consequences, either for his own cause and interest in particular, or for those of his co-religionists in general, but which nevertheless he knew well enough might come to pass at any moment, owing to the violence and fanaticism of some of the Calvinists to whose charge the Queen was resolved to trust her immediate fortunes, and the two Guises their niece. He is much praised by some of the Protestant historians of Scotland on account of the seeming moderation of his ways, and the strict propriety of his conduct with regard to that article of the pact concluded at St. Dizier by which the Queen agreed to grant to the Protestants a complete toleration in respect of the practice of their religion, but continued to the Catholics the state of proscription to which theirs and her own was reduced in consequence of the pretended Act of 1560.¹

¹ That her half-brother should have exacted of her and the Guises this undertaking shows plainly enough the light in which he at least regarded the much disputed matter of the legality of the Act mentioned. That the Queen and her French advisers should have consented to it shows as plainly the political straits to which they were reduced at this time, as well as the somewhat compromising nature, on this occasion at least, of their dealings with the Protestant envoy. It is true that the ban on Catholicism (the religion of the vast majority of the

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They call attention to his magnanimity, and in so doing take occasion to laud their hero to the skies, on account of his action in preventing an Edinburgh Protestant mob from breaking into the Queen's private chapel at Holyrood but a day or two after she was returned to Scotland, and there and then doing some barbarous insult to religion and herself; but probably less prejudiced minds and more discerning eyes than these will prefer to discern in the incident spoken of, not so much an instance of the minister's magnanimity of soul and nature as a deliberate stroke of good policy on his part. He knew well enough, no doubt, that the bird was now in the net, but yet not fast enough in the net to allow of her being alarmed with impunity, in a word, so much frightened as to cause her to seek to make good her escape whilst yet there was time, and the snare of the fowler not completely closed.

The cause of the first of the several quarrels that occurred between the Queen and Moray was the marriage of the former with Darnley, though it is probable enough that the Queen had begun to doubt the disinterestedness and the political rectitude of her half-brother and chief minister some time before the event mentioned took place, that is to say, at the time of the conclusion of the military expedition which she undertook in company with the latter against Huntly and the Gordons. It is little to be doubted, I suppose, that on the principle that the fewer the obstacles to a settled course of action the greater the advantage on the whole to him that takes it, Moray, agreeably to Leslie's witness with regard to this

Queen's subjects) was to remain in force so long only as a meeting of the Estates (to which the Queen pledged herself) remained unconvened. A parliament convened and assembled, the whole question of the religious future of the country would come up for re-consideration at the hands of the Queen and the Estates—such was the arrangement.

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matter, would have preferred by a deal that the Queen should remain a widow rather than that she should take to herself a second husband; but failing the former eventuality, doubtless his preference in the Queen's regard was always that she should marry a foreign prince, that is to say, a prince who, no matter how exalted in rank he might be, and considerable his talent or great his power abroad, yet should be little familiar with the country and its affairs, but content at all times to leave in native—and particularly, of course, in the minister's own hands—such control of its fortunes as his marriage to the Queen might bring him, and thus occasion to him, Moray, but slight if any interruption to the quiet and ordered pursuit of his own schemes of ambition and self-aggrandisement. As to the union with Darnley, to this, no doubt, he was as much opposed when the first rumours of it came to his ears as he was so when later he and a number of his political friends and followers took up arms against it, and on the same grounds, then, as those on which he came to act afterwards. He opposed it principally because Darnley was the acknowledged head of the English Catholics, and for selfish reasons, as well as motives of religion, he had no wish to see a new interest planted at the Scottish Court, where, if it were to unite with that of the Catholics in Scotland, the two acting in concert might easily come to overturn all that had been done in the kingdom by way of "true religion" since 1560, and perhaps drive himself and his friends from power into the bargain. The two had been friendly enough when first Darnley appeared from England at the Scottish Court; but as soon as Moray knew for sure that the Queen was resolved to marry Lennox's son and heir, he quarrelled with the latter, and

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so, of course, broke with the former, setting on foot soon afterwards the abortive rebellion to which reference has been made already in the present chapter. But Mary replied to her half-brother's challenge with characteristic spirit and an admirable promptitude. Summoning to her aid her feudal array, she set herself at its head, and proceeding rapidly southwards, whither the discontented Moray had fled, she suppressed the rebellion almost as soon as it was begun, practically without striking, or yet receiving, so much as a single blow. To escape the pains and penalties of State now threatening him at his half-sister's instance, Moray fled to England, in whose queen he had a powerful if not very liberal protector and friend, and there he remained in sure retreat till he returned to Scotland, in time to "look through his fingers" at the murder of "Davie."

After the fall of Moray from power, David Riccio, or Rizzio, a native of the Savoy in Italy, became the real director of the Queen's affairs ; for though it is true that her choice of a principal minister now fell on Maitland of Lethington, who also was a person of importance among the sectaries, yet it appears that neither liking nor trusting him overmuch, accordingly she transferred her confidence to the Italian named, who, besides being a warm friend to the marriage with Darnley, had showed in other ways agreeable to the Queen his entire devotion to her cause and person. Rizzio had come to Scotland in 1561 in the train of the Marquis of Moretto, Savoyard envoy to the Court of Holyrood, and it happened that when, his mission being concluded, the Marquis went to take his leave of the Queen, he took occasion of the event to commend to her very warmly the other. Whereupon the Queen, acting on the hint thus given

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her, set "Davie," as he soon came to be styled familiarly at the Scottish Court, among the members of the choir of her chapel at Holyrood, he being in a manner doubly qualified for such a post since, the son of a musician, he was himself no mean performer on the viol, and had, besides, a very tolerable singing voice.

According to the contemporary Italian accounts of him, "Davie" was a young man of considerable mental parts, presentable enough, though not handsome, in his person, and having some knowledge of the ways and habits of courts. From the situation spoken of the Queen raised "Davie" in the year 1564 to that of acting French Secretary to herself, though, according to the belief of some who lived in those times, the Savoyard had ever but a somewhat imperfect knowledge of the French tongue. In any event, what happened was that the new French Secretary pleased the Queen so much that soon she gave him her entire confidence, trusting to him matters of State of the greatest moment, and seeking with the utmost freedom, and as often as she had need of it, his counsel in respect of them, a course of conduct in his regard which, though no doubt it immensely obliged and flattered the Italian, and served well apparently her own immediate turn and interest, yet contributed not a little to the favourite's unhappy end.

Such of the Scottish historians as take openly the side of Mary, as well as some who have written in the same way on the same head, but who do not belong to the nation mentioned, are fond to represent the Queen at this period of her reign as little better than a puppet in the hands of the sectaries. They go so far as to affirm that by them she was cruelly and continuously constrained in all

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matters of moment having to do with the government of the country, and that by consequence she was entirely powerless to call to her service for the public good such of her subjects, being Catholics, as might have given her, had they been free so to do, wise and sufficient counsel—in short, saved her from the melancholy fate which in a few years' time overtook both herself and her crown. It is hard to determine by written witness what foundation in truth and correspondence to reality these representations of the Queen might have, at this or, indeed, any other period of her actual reign; but what seems tolerably sure is that the principal author of the notions glanced at was the Queen herself, who in letters written by her and sent to the Holy See, as in others which she wrote to the different courts of the Continent about the same time, was used to be very free with her excuses and complaints in this regard, alleging that so constrained by the sectaries about her was she that she was prevented from calling to her service the counsellors she would like to employ therein, and thus, she alleged, was she rendered powerless to do for religion, and the good of the country in general, that which ever lay much at her heart, and this she said she was as strongly minded to do as could be, in behalf of both the causes named. It seems to me, however—and I doubt not but the same thought has occurred as often and with the same strength to others—that the excuses in her own behalf made by the Queen at this time, and the substance of which has been transferred from thence to history, are on the whole more artful than just; in fine, that they take their rise, not from the strength of the exigencies of the Queen's situation at the time, but from those of her policy, which necessitated on her part the playing a waiting game in

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Scotland, and, incidentally, the cultivation of friendly relations with the heretics among whom she had chosen to cast her lot.

In the first place it is plain that the Queen was under no sort of obligation to trust herself, her cause, and her fortunes in general to the Protestants, and, further, that if she chose so to do, it were but reasonable on her part to expect that they should seek to constrain her as, in her letters to the Pope and to other reigning princes of those times, she alleged that they constrained her. The Scottish Huguenots formed as yet but an inconsiderable party in the State; and though it is true that the principal seat of their power in the kingdom was that of the feudal government and the capital of the country, yet the Lords of the Congregation, and their friends in the south, knew well enough that their military power was small relatively to that of the Catholic lords and their allies the chiefs of clans. Hardly, therefore, are the sectaries to be blamed, though, improving the advantage which the Queen herself had been the means of giving them, they sought by means as well lawful as, on occasions, the contrary, to constrain her, to keep her, in other words, precisely where, in pursuance of the policy adopted at St. Dizier, the exigencies of it placed her as soon as her return to Scotland was effected, that is to say, in their own hands and subject to their own interest and policy. Still, the presence at her council board, when first she returned to Scotland from France, of Huntly and other Catholic lords; the marriage with Darnley; and the very bold and free conduct which she used in the south on the occasion of the so-called "Roundabout Raid,"¹ a

¹ Such was the name given by the populace of the South to Mary's expedition against Moray.

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military expedition that could not have been very pleasing to her Protestant subjects in general, one would think, unite to suggest very strongly that what constraint of power, restriction of initiative and action under which the Queen laboured at this conjuncture existed (so far as existence it might have) on paper, that is to say in the letters which the Queen sent to her friends abroad, rather than at the seat of government from which these missives were dispatched—an opinion which her choice of “Davie,” a foreigner, and a Catholic, for favourite and confidant, and her cold neglect of Lethington, must do much to strengthen, one would imagine, in each impartial mind that is addressed to a just examination of this particular matter.

The author of the plot whose object was the destruction of “Davie,” the Queen’s favourite and confidential adviser, was Darnley, and the spring of it the latter’s jealousy of his wife and the other. It appears that at one time the two were good friends, probably for no better reason so far as Darnley was concerned than that the Italian had favoured his marriage with Mary; for the truth about the son of Lennox is that, besides other and darker vices, he had ingratitude and selfishness in a very high degree. Thus it happened that no sooner did it become apparent to all at Court that the Queen’s esteem for “Davie” and her confidence in him were increasing almost daily, than Darnley took offence and at the same time the alarm, indulging, according to his wont, the wildest and the most absurd suspicions touching the object of his hatred, going so far in the latter as to allege that his wife was the Italian’s mistress, and farther, that the secretary’s true design was to supplant him not only in the affections of his wife, but also in his

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capacity of nearest and lawful adviser to the Queen. Proceeding to confide these unworthy and entirely groundless suspicions to some of his boon companions, by them, in due course they were communicated, suitably embroidered, no doubt, to others, among whom were some who wished as much as Darnley could do the death of the favourite, though for reasons very different probably from those entertained by the other, whom, no doubt, they despised as much as they ridiculed his accusations touching the Queen. And in a while these malcontents at Court, joining themselves to others of a like sort and temper, a plot against the Secretary was laid, and in due course, executed, in the cruel and barbarous fashion narrated in history.

Though no doubt "Davie" was quite as much at one with the Queen in her resolution not to pardon the exiled Moray, or any of the other Protestant lords who had risen in arms with him on the occasion of the Queen's marriage with Darnley, yet it is probable that the favourite would have preserved his life, and the Queen a very able, industrious, and faithful servant, had his public conduct generally been more discreet than, unfortunately for him, and no less unfortunately for her, it happened to be. However, though in the event "Davie's" fate was to be murdered in the Queen's palace by a band of ruffians in circumstances resembling somewhat those in which another political murder was brought about in France about the same time, instead of his being taken by his enemies and hanged by them by the neck over a bridge, as happened to another of his kind in the reign of James III, it must be allowed that neither himself, nor yet the Queen, was entirely free of all blame in respect of the end that happened to him, and occasioned

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to her so great a loss. For if the way of the transgressor is commonly hard, most certainly those of royal favourites, according as their stories are recounted in history, show very often an extraordinary sameness, a remarkable resemblance to one another in respect of the nature of the upward, as well as that of the downward, steps that mark them. Thus, it happened that no sooner was "Davie," a man of humble origin, and, at first, not too exalted employment, come to place and power at Court, than he proceeded to give himself the greatest airs; he showed himself arrogant, haughty and ostentatious, vying with the nobles in respect of the richness of his apparel, the profusion of his expenditure, and the sumptuousness of his household and equipage, thus raising about him a swarm of powerful enemies, who, but for this unreasonable and most unseasonable display of grandeur and self-importance on his part, would probably not have meddled either with him or his affairs, so far at least as these related to the Queen's business. What happened in the event, however, was that the jealousy of Darnley, joining itself to that of the nobles who despised and detested the Italian for the reasons glanced at above, that concert was made and plot laid whose result was the death of the favourite, and simultaneously the loss to the Queen of a most able, zealous, and faithful servant.

The historians generally are agreed that David Rizzio was a man of a very considerable talent; but beyond affirming that the Queen's affairs prospered much whilst they were in his hands they give but slender information touching the means that he employed in order to give to them this prosperous motion, nor do they disclose the nature of the matters that were the principal occasion

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of the Italian's industry in the Queen's behalf.¹ No doubt the extreme brevity of his reign and rule as the Crown's principal mentor and confidant—he was raised to the cabinet in 1565 and murdered in March 1566—renders this a deal harder to be done in his case than it would be perhaps in that of some other whose tenure of power was less short and whose end was less sudden and bloody, though it is proper to observe here that Davie's influence over the Queen dates from 1564 at least, when, as has been remarked already, he received the appointment of French Secretary at the Court of Holyrood. A process of elimination as regards detail is often a useful device in order to clear and explain matters when such are perplexed above the common, and when, too, informations are more imperfect and traditions more precarious by nature than they are apt to be with regard to disputed passages and debated conjunctures of history. Applying, then, to the present case this simple but often most useful means of elucidation, we are soon obliged to the opinion that the principal object of the Queen's and her favourite's concern at the particular conjuncture of affairs spoken of was domestic "business" rather than foreign affairs.

The subject of the difficulty of correspondence with the Holy See by means of letter and courier, and the immense interruptions and delays to which correspondence in general was subjected in those days, is briefly touched by Father Pollen who, in his introduction to *Papal Negotiations*, takes occasion of the subject to observe that if, as some have since complained, the Popes were often very badly informed as to the immediate situation and the progress of public events in

¹ Little diplomatic activity abroad seems to have marked this part of the Queen's reign.

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Scotland, such a thing is little to be wondered at, having regard to the difficulties touched above. He says that sometimes a letter sent from the Scottish capital and addressed to Rome took as much as a twelvemonth to reach its destination; and I remember to have read somewhere lately that when in 1570 Thomas Sackville, the statesman and poet, was sent by Elizabeth on an embassy to Charles IX it took him three weeks all but a day to make the journey from London to Paris. Still, since it appears that no great volume of diplomatic correspondence passed between Scotland and the Holy See at the time now under consideration, nor had been passing 'twixt the two for a year or so previously, accordingly it is but reasonable to conclude that it was not so much plans and schemes to succour the cause of religion in Scotland as matters of moment less immediately related to them which then formed the subject of the Queen's and her minister's most earnest councils. Farther, and in conformity to this supposition, it appears that concurrently with the decrease in respect of the volume of the Queen's correspondence with the Holy See, the letters which she wrote to her uncle the Cardinal of Guise, began to decline in number, as well as to take on a new air or turn. They are warm, affectionate, and dutiful yet; but what is now very observable in them is the Queen's growing sense of the fact that she and France, and the French politics too, were now separated from one another, not by a geographical distance alone, but also by a world of different aims and interests, all which united, and must continue to work in concert, so as to bind and keep them apart, so that almost were they become strangers to one another, in the meanwhile at least. Implicit in them, too, is a resolution on the Queen's

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part, to act for the future on her own initiative, to seek and follow her own counsel and judgment in respect of matters of State in Scotland, instead of applying to her uncle on such occasions, as she had been used to do formerly for guidance and advice touching particular conjectures of politics, which her immediate situation, and the means she now had at her command to enable her to determine them with advantage to her cause and herself she considered doubtless as superior to any that the Cardinal could proffer her, widely separated from one another as they were, and unfamiliar to a great extent with one another's situation as the flight of time and the course of events in both countries had caused them to be.

Labanoff, seeking to explain the elevation of Rizzio to the royal ear and supreme confidence, thinks that the event spoken of was the consequence of the Queen's resolution to make herself absolute mistress of the realm; but for my part I think that here he is anticipating in some sort a movement in politics which even in France, where the necessity of it at the time was far greater, in view of the state of anarchy into which the religious disputes and troubles of the period had plunged that country, made no great show in influential quarters till well on towards the close of the sixteenth century; a movement besides that most certainly had neither ground nor yet had made any appearance in Scottish politics at the time he mentions. In a word absolute kings had not yet appeared in France, where, I repeat, was greater need of them at the time than existed in Scotland at any time during Mary's brief reign, or indeed after it; for which reason, though I agree with the writer mentioned that the rise of Rizzio to power is best explained on the hypothesis that simultaneously with it the

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Queen's policy and measures of State generally underwent a very considerable transformation, yet on no ground do I agree with him that either now or at any other time whilst the Queen was resident in Scotland was she minded to play the dangerous and difficult, and in any event entirely unnecessary, part which he thinks it well to ascribe to her.

I think, then, that the Queen's choice of "Davie" for a confidant and an adviser-in-chief synchronised with a resolution on her part to disentangle herself and her cause as much and as far as might be safe from the politics of the Calvinists; but preserving at the same time the *status quo ante*, so far at least as it had regard to the situation in which she had placed herself, relatively to the Calvinists, in consequence of the policy adopted at St. Dizier. I think, also, that she was positively resolved to forbid the return to Scotland of the banished Protestant lords, and particularly Moray, for as long a space of time as it might be possible, as well as expedient, to bring about, since it must have been plain to her that the fewer of their sort she had about her, the easier would it be for her to preserve the peace of the realm, or at all events the peace of that part of it in which the influence of these lords was formidable; and since her policy as her immediate care was to ensure for her dominions as much internal peace and quietness as might be had, it is plain that in so judging, that is, in resolving to keep out the banished lords and their followers among the lesser gentry, she was acting wisely, not only as regards the important matter of the succession of England, but generally, that is, in the interest of her crown and country. As to the Catholics, she knew well, no doubt, that despite the severe rebuff which she

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had administered to them of late, and the serious discontents among them to which her expedition against Huntly and the Gordons had given rise, she could rely on them yet, at a push, with the same degree of certainty that had been present to her mind when she and the Guises came to throw the dice of fortune at St. Dizier. In fine, fall what might, she knew that she was ever sure of the Catholics; in the meanwhile, she must continue to play the waiting game, but from now onwards with a deal more application and much more spirit and boldness on her part than she had used, in order to the same end, in the immediate past.

Another topic of much concern at this time in respect of the joint councils of the Queen and "Davie," was, I suppose, that meeting of the Estates of the realm to which St. Dizier pledged her. She knew well, of course, that the convention that decreed in the year 1560 the abolition of Catholicism, and the substitution of Calvinism in its room, was a completely "packed" assembly, illegal in its institution and not less so in its decrees, so far as these latter related to the article of religion in Scotland; and knowing these things, doubtless she had now no mind to run the risk of the experiment of yet another such assembly, and, too, no matter how little stomach, or rather how little scruple, she herself and "Davie" might have touching the matter of a complete toleration for heretics, but none whatever (according to the Act) for Catholics, still good policy at this conjuncture required of her that she should do what she could and might in order to prolong, though but for the moment, the pretended settlement of 1560. Religious heats, the renewal under her own edict, and very probably in her own presence, of disputes and quarrels touching matters of

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creed, all which, humanly speaking, could serve no end but to interrupt and embarrass the progress of the great design which she herself had in view for the good of religion and the peace and prosperity of the kingdom, were much to be deprecated, particularly at this so critical conjuncture of affairs, when a weight not much greater than that of a single hair might turn the scales of the public fortunes from peace to bloodshed and disorder, instead of to that just balance of rival interests which was what she ardently desired and must ever wish, and for which she must now as always strive. Therefore, since reason so enjoined, and good policy so required, such ways and means of preventing, or delaying at least, the meeting spoken of as their ingenuity might devise, or opportunity suggest to them, must be fallen on, and put into execution as early, as quickly, and with as much good grace and management, as might be.

We may be sure, too, that despite the many and great distractions that marked this busy scene of domestic politics, the Queen and her favourite were always of the same mind with regard to the important matter of the English succession. Elizabeth must be amused by Mary, so as to bring her to entertain touching the Queen of Scots more friendly and more favourable notions than she had entertained in her regard heretofore; but then these advances on the part of the Scottish Queen must in no wise prevent her from continuing to keep a strict watch on the proceedings of the other, more particularly as to the matter of the English intrigues in Scotland, of the extent and seriousness of which among the great Protestant lords of her realm the Queen had ample proof already, and suspected with reason that a deal more to the same effect might

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be had, and for little more, too, than the mere seeking of it on her part. Elizabeth's plain reluctance to discover to the world the secret of the successor to her throne must be adroitly circumvented, so as to draw from her by hook or by crook a declaration of sorts in favour of her "sister" of Scotland, whose undoubted right to it none—not even Darnley—could dispute with reason. As to the latter, a sot, a blockhead, and a proved mischief-maker, all good policy demanded that the Queen should continue to exclude him her secret councils at least, lest worming his way into them, by means of blandishments and endearment in her regard, as freely professed as little intended, he should come at last to spoil all, to cast away the ship on the rocks of his own incompetence and want of discretion, foresight, knowledge, and conduct at the very moment of her going about in order to make port with all sail set and a smiling sea about her.

The supposition which I favour is, then, that the Queen chose "Davie" for minister because she thought him the best instrument for her purpose that she could lay hands on at Court at the time; because, able, faithful, industrious, and devoted to her cause and person, he was a foreigner, and thus in some sort independent of the two parties by which her kingdom was divided; because she knew that though no trust was to be placed in her husband, either as to heart or yet as to head, yet that always might she hope with reason to draw him to her side whenever she might have need of him, by means of persuasions¹ suitably used and adroitly applied;

¹ "But he is so fickle that the Queen will find no difficulty in persuading him by endearments." Such is the opinion held of Darnley by the Bishop of Mondovi and expressed by him in a letter to Cardinal Alessandria, written about this time.

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because she was resolved at this time to give to the great design of the English succession a brisker and a more powerful motion in politics than it had received at her instance at all events heretofore; and, lastly, because she distrusted entirely the exiled Moray, and was resolved to keep him and the rest of the banished Protestant lords out of the kingdom for as long a period of time as might be. For my part, I think the Queen's choice of "Davie" admirable in all respects save one, and I think, too, that it sets her acumen and her powers of judgment in respect of men and occasions in a light as favourable to her as can be on this occasion at least, notwithstanding this exception. For hardly, as it seems to me, was she any way at fault, though in the event the vanity and love of ostentation of Rizzio betrayed her confidence, and so did damage to her cause; for unforeseen, and perhaps entirely unforeseeable, occurrences of this sort, untoward developments of human nature, such as happened in this case, are not to be blamed with justice on those who suffer by reason of them; but should be set to the account of fortune, whose fickleness and waywardness in respect of the affairs of the sons of men is one of the standing themes of history, and imparts to its scenes and records a spice and an interest which would not be so apparent or yet near as lively, were fate and human nature ordered differently.

CHAPTER VIII

Was the Queen Privy to the Murder of Darnley?

FROM certain letters of Queen Elizabeth that were published lately in London we know now for sure that she was much angered by the Queen of Scots' marriage with Henry Darnley. Formerly, it was a point of dispute with historians whether or no the Queen's rage, which she showed very plainly on this occasion, was real or no; for, as is well known, Elizabeth Tudor was apt at times to dissemble, to feign pleasure or discover the reverse according as her private sentiments moved, or the whims of her humour or the needs of her policy, at the time swayed her.

In the letters spoken of the Queen of England complains, and complains with much heat, that Darnley, her subject, has been enticed from her court, and into a union of which she strongly disapproves and must ever think all ways unsuitable. She accuses Mary and her advisers of a plot to marry Darnley to the Queen of Scots contrary to her own royal will, and expressed wishes. In fine, the loss to Elizabeth of this handsome lounge about her court and person seems to have struck her with a peculiar force; but with a strength nevertheless that, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, one would expect her to experience on so provoking and in her opinion entirely untoward an occasion.

The project of Mary's marriage with the heir of Spain having been laid aside, since such a union would have been contrary to the French wishes and interest at the time, and, incidentally, no less contrary to the spirit and letter of the policy laid at St. Dizier, it was natural that

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as soon as ever the full weight of these considerations was felt the matrimonial eye of Mary Stewart should have begun to rove elsewhere in the west; nor is it surprising that the Queen of Scots should have regarded with favour the person of Henry Darnley, and perhaps yet more favourably, the political advantages of a union with him.

There are figures in history touching whose parts and merits no just doubt can be had, just as others there are touching whose virtues as rulers, or as actors in some other scene of public life, no great agreement of opinion exists, or indeed can be expected with reason. But Henry Darnley belongs to that order of historical figures in behalf of any one of which it would be hard to speak a civil word, and absurd to seek to lessen the severity of the judgment passed on them by their contemporaries, and confirmed since by posterity. He was by nature dissolute, idle, boastful, profuse, irresolute, trifling, proud as the peacock, and as little intelligent: in no sense or circumstances did he prove himself a man of his word; but in all the scenes in which he came to engage, he appears to view as treacherous, vindictive, jealous, mean and mendacious. To these very considerable blemishes of human nature he seems to have added an overwhelming ambition; but since his mental parts were as contemptible as his designs were grandiose, the natural effect in him of these divergent moral states was a continuous emotional conflict of will with purpose on one hand, and interest with vacillation of mind and an inconstant spirit on the other, so that nothing considerable to which he came to set his hand ever prospered with him, or yet with such as were unwise enough to engage with him in this way.

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He was no fit mate for the Queen, nor for any other woman about her Court who had a soul above a handsome face, or sense enough to understand that good looks and animal courage in a husband are not sufficient unto happiness in married life. Yet to this man who, at least in a moral point of view, was certainly the most ineligible of all her different suitors, the Queen of Scots gave her hand in marriage, deceived, it may be, in the first instance by the attractions of his person, but misled above and beyond these advantages by the nature of his political connections, there is good reason to believe.

The importance in the political scenes of those times of Henry Darnley springs, historically speaking, from the fact that, failing Mary Stewart, he was next legitimate heir to the English throne, his mother, the Countess of Lennox, being Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter to Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus, by Margaret, daughter to Henry VII of England, who, it will be remembered, was wife, and later widow, to James IV of Scotland. Word being brought to the English Court of the intended marriage at Edinburgh, Queen Elizabeth proceeded to imprison (not for the first time nor yet for the last) Darnley's mother, on the ground that she, too, was concerned in the plot to marry her son to the Queen of Scots; and perhaps in this incident of the Countess's very chequered political career, is discovered the true author of the intrigues which resulted in the union spoken of; for, long before Henry Darnley and Mary Stewart were married at Edinburgh, the Countess had been very active in Scotland, angling in the troubled waters of those times for support for her son, who, it appears, she was ambitious

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to see king of England at Elizabeth's death. Such, in a few words, appears to have been the Countess's original design; but it will be understood very readily that as soon as ever the above-mentioned windfall to her plots and schemes occurred, she changed, or rather enlarged, her original plan, setting on her son's head, in her imagination, the crown of the Scots as well as that of England. A portrait of the Countess, done by an unknown hand of those times, shows us a strong masculine countenance, marked apparently by very considerable mental gifts, and much power of will. It may well be, therefore, that, though she was unfortunate in her son, as well as disappointed in her husband, who was a man of slender mental gifts, and of a poor spirit,¹ yet that the former at all events shared her secret, and cherished it, even as did she, esteeming himself Heaven's chosen instrument in this most important matter, despite the fact that he had neither the talent nor yet the moral qualities necessary to the great adventure glanced at. Thus though on both sides there was a strong political motive to the marriage spoken of, yet at the same time there was, in the case of each of the parties to it, as strong a principle of counter-interest; since what Darnley designed by the marriage was, first, to supresede Mary on the throne of the Scots, and, secondly, from thence to prosecute his claim to the English throne; but then what Mary thought to gain by it was, first, the support, through Darnley, who was their acknowledged head, of the English Catholics, and secondly a husband who in the order of succession to the English throne stood next to herself. The political

¹ Naturally enough, after the crime of Kirk o' Field Lennox was hot on the trail of the criminals. Nevertheless, there is a heat, a strength and a vindictiveness, conjoined with a recklessness, about the charges and innuendoes which he then made, which seems to bespeak for them a feminine origin.

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advantages of the marriage to both parties to it are plain as can be.

The story of the marriage of Mary Stewart and Henry Darnley is, properly considered, the tale of the collision of two sets of rival political aims, neither of which was in the least degree susceptible to be accommodated to the other; and if to these grave disabilities of political design and intention, we add a complete incompatibility of temper and mind, in respect of both the parties to the marriage, gross and continuous misbehaviour on one side, and on the other a disposition too quick to forgive and ready to forget, in these events the problem of the union is made plain, and by consequence it ceases to be the cause of speculation and the source of mystification which it still is to many, be they friends to the Queen's memory, or on the other hand inveterate enemies to her cause in history.

A decent tolerance of one another, conjoined with a just understanding of one another's imperfections and infirmities, is surely the utmost that any man of sense will expect of those societies of men which go by the name of "nations," so far at least as the different relations of these bodies with one another are concerned. It is true that particular nations may from time to time fraternise, as it is called, with certain of their neighbours; but very probably this they are led to do more by reason of a motive of gain, of self-interest, than on account of any more respectable, or even understandable, principle of conduct; for it seems to be a rule, almost an ordinance of nature, that nation should despise nation, and each people dislike very heartily all the others. But the two nations of the English and the Scots have long learned to

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accommodate in a decent toleration of one another the respective differences of nature, of conduct and habit which they have effected largely by means of a union which, though it may not have taught, or yet brought either one or the other much else to purpose besides, yet has conferred on both this one great good at least namely, that it has taught them to live in continuous peace with one another. Still, at the time to which the present remarks apply neither of the two nations named had learned the necessary lesson glanced at. On the contrary, each was then the inveterate enemy of the other, and, by consequence, destructive wars and bloody feuds between the two peoples were frequent. It is hardly to be supposed that in seeking to gain to her cause and interest the English Catholics, which she hoped to effect no doubt by means of the marriage with Darnley, the Queen of Scots intended at the time more than a stroke of good policy in her own behalf; but if, as seems probable enough, she was actuated therein by selfish motives principally, at least it must have been apparent to her and Rizzio that the success of her cause of the English succession must largely depend on the English Catholics, whose support of it she hoped to secure by means of the marriage with Darnley. Both she and Rizzio must have known well enough that to gain this end was no easy matter, even though Darnley himself were willing; but then neither seems to have understood to the full the extent and the strength of the difficulties which here confronted them. However, a strong light is cast on this matter by certain representations addressed to Philip II of Spain, a little later in history, by certain English Catholics who were then in exile in that country, on the occasion of a plot to restore the imprisoned

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Queen of Scots to her throne. For these English,¹ on being consulted as to the matter spoken of, informed Philip that for their part they would in no wise meddle in it, since their opinion was that it were better that the King himself or some nominee of his should reign over England rather than that the Queen of Scots or any of her nation should come to their throne.

But independently of the obstacle presented to the Queen's policy by the English objections to a Scottish successor to their throne, the public and private conduct of her husband aggravated many-fold the difficulties and perplexities of her cause and situation. The extraordinary leniency and unparalleled tenderness of heart shown to her husband by the Queen on several occasions on which a very different conduct on her part is what might be expected with reason of her, it would be unwise to ascribe entirely to Christian charity and a high sense of wifely duty; but much more reasonably, I think, to mixed motives, among which by no means the least I reckon the sense she had of the risks and dangers her policy must run, should she decide to break with Darnley altogether, to cast him off as irremediably perverse and incorrigibly foolish.² His whole career in Scotland, his repeated attempts to persuade the Queen to grant him the crown matrimonial, his outbursts of rage and bitter

¹ Cardinal Allan, Father Persons, and the Duchess of Feria, an English-woman of the family of Dormer married to a Spaniard.

² I presume here what I have ever thought on this head, and think each time I come to consider the political passages of those times, and that is that the Queen knew nothing of her husband's design on her throne, which, I suppose, remained to the end his mother's secret and his own. The late Major Mahon, whose industry I admire, but whose critical faculty seems small, thought that when King Henry entered the palace the night that Rizzio was killed, he was in mind and mood to kill the Queen also. I allow that Darnley was mad enough then, as before and after the crime was committed, to entertain any wild scheme; but I doubt much even his capacity to deceive himself so completely as to imagine that his fellow-conspirators would consent to make him King of Scots, though his wife were dead. Still, who can tell?

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disappointment as often as this stepping-stone to power was refused him, or postponed; the cables he formed and the intrigues he engaged in at Court and in the country generally, all unite to point strongly to one conclusion, namely, that in one respect at least he was the true son of his worldly-minded, scheming, and ambitious mother, no matter how much he might lack her talent, and farther belie his maternal origin by the weakness of his character and the futility of his conduct.

I suppose that no theory more extravagant, or cruel by nature, and unjust in its effects, was ever propounded in or out of history, than that the Queen was privy to her husband's murder. Without a doubt, it is some compensation in respect of the mischief that has been wrought in the past through the channel of the charge mentioned that to-day near all opinion that is worth the having as to the matter of the authorship of the crime of Kirk-o'-Field inclines more and more to the belief that Mary Stewart was innocent of all pre-knowledge of it, though formerly it was a sort of fashion with some historians to lay it at her door, or, at all events, as near to it as these writers, by means of spurious evidence, partial witness, and the keeping a blind eye obstinately turned to all the probabilities of the case could contrive. I propose to examine this matter very briefly under the three heads of (1) the Queen's nature, (2) her policy, and (3) the evidence associated to the case.

Mary Stewart was well instructed in the principles of Christian religion; and though, as I have remarked already, she was not at the time to which these observations apply—no matter what she might be in the same way afterwards—a woman of extraordinary piety, yet she was devout in the sense that she knew and practised her

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religion; and surely to allow this character to one who is charged with having connived at the murder of her husband is not only entirely inconsistent with such, but makes of it a species of ethical nonsense besides, there being no proof whatever that the Queen was a hypocrite or like to be drawn to crime of so heinous a kind. But besides good religious instruction, and a proper sense of the moral virtues which it is the principal object of all such instruction to implant in the human soul, she enjoyed the natural advantages of a kindly heart, and the humane sentiments which are the usual moral effects of it. Urged on one occasion to put an end at once to the Protestant religion in Scotland and the subjects who professed it by ordering a general massacre of the latter, she shrank with horror and indignation from the base suggestion; and in many other ways, and on divers other occasions, she proved by her conduct, as well as by the precepts she held, that she was ever mercifully inclined, tender above her times and station in respect of matters involving violent measures and the shedding of blood. Indeed, principal among her different faults and failings was a tendency on her part to show clemency and exert mercy when to be less kind would have been kinder to the offenders, and a deal better policy in her own respect. Further, such a conduct on her part would not have exposed her to the smallest moral blame.

Brought up in the principles of the Catholic faith, it was natural that she should have had that which she ever showed, namely, a high sense of her duties as a married woman. Thus she was ever extraordinarily tender to Darnley, forgiving him his infidelities, his sottishness, his brutality, and, generally speaking, the extravagance of his conduct in her regard, time after time, notwithstanding

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and these are, the Queen's Catholicity, the essential goodness of her heart, and the uniform kindness of her conduct to others. The leopard must always wear his spots; and, depend on it, the man of ill designs and a bad nature will discover both soon or late—a simple truth which such as allow some moral merit to the Queen of Scots, but think her guilty of conspiring with others to bring about her husband's death, would do well to bear in mind.

But presuming that all such reasonings in her regard prove fruitless in the event, powerless to persuade opinion in the Queen's favour, accordingly, to scepticism thus entrenched, and doubt thus obstinately professed, I oppose now the proof of the Queen's policy, trusting with confidence to this to clear her memory, once and for all—even though the faith that can move mountains, and bring the unbalanced mind to reason, should fail to work the wonder of conversion postulated by the foregoing remarks.

He who takes his own life, or does aught which in the common opinion of mankind runs counter entirely to human nature, is judged, and judged, too, very reasonably, insane, unless, of course, he was plainly not so at the time when the act of seeming madness was committed. Now the immediate effect of the murder done at Kirk-o'-Field was to destroy the whole edifice of the Queen's policy as entirely as if it also had been destroyed with the powder that blew up the lodging in which King Henry lay. It is plain, therefore, that what we must believe, on the presumption of the Queen's guilt in the affair mentioned, is, on her part, an act of madness whose like it would be hard to parallel in history, and as hard, I doubt not, to surpass in the experience of such as devote themselves to the care and

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cure of the insane in asylums and other such institutions. Foolish though the Queen had proved herself on occasions in the past, and yet more foolish though she was to prove herself in the immediate future, still I, for one, having about me, I hope, at the time my usual wits, most positively refuse to believe that the Queen was mad enough, so entirely undone in a point of view of reason and plain common sense, as to seek to compass, or, alternatively, to act in concert with such as sought it, her husband's death, whose life, apart altogether from all considerations of religion, and notions of common humanity, was in some sort necessary to her policy, and being bound up with it, it was therefore her plain interest to preserve, not to destroy.

A host of other considerations unite to invade the mind at this conjuncture of the Queen's affairs; but, perhaps to collect together the more considerable of them, and thereafter to set them in the reflected light of the explosion that occurred at Kirk-o'-Field, is the best means, as the shortest way, to bring these different matters to a head, and home to the reader's mind at the same time the conclusion that the extent, as well as the gravity, of the havoc so wrought in respect of all the Queen's hopes, her plans, and schemes and political fortunes in general was far too great and complete to permit our entertaining for even a single moment of time the mad idea that the Queen was privy to Darnley's murder.

In the first place, she was now on much better terms with Elizabeth, and the latter was more favourably inclined towards her, than had been the case in the whole former history of the relations of the two women. From the letters which the Queen wrote to the other at this time it is easy to collect that she was now in high hope that at

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long last her cause of the succession of England was about to enter a new phase, to take a turn which in the event could not be but favourable to her and it, provided always that Elizabeth continued in the same mind touching it and her which she now appeared to entertain with regard to both. In short, what Mary was now hoping and working for with great heart and diligence was a public recognition on the Queen of England's part of the justness of her claim to the English throne. But, then, no sooner was the crime of Kirk-o'-Field known at the English Court, but the thread of these promising negotiations was severed immediately; and by consequence what Mary received from thence was, not as formerly polite speech and fair promises, but sharp rebuke, together with other unmistakable signs of the Queen of England's horror, disgust, and anger at the tragedy that had occurred. So that what we are asked to believe by such as profess themselves convinced that the Queen of Scots had a guilty knowledge of the plot laid against Darnley is that with the hand with which she was writing to Elizabeth in the belief that the latter was now her friend, and might yet be persuaded to do her business touching the vital matter of the English succession, she was at the same time subscribing the band which was her husband's death-warrant, the effect of which on Elizabeth's mind she must have known for sure, had she had the guilty knowledge spoken of, would be precisely that which followed the commission of the crime at Kirk-o'-Field, namely, the immediate and entire destruction of all her hopes and plans so far as the Queen of England was concerned. Though folly be as free as air, and, like it, impartial as death itself touching persons, yet here reason rebels, and credulity is set a limit beyond which it were little wise to trespass, no matter

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how much spite and prejudice may conspire to persuade their bubbles to exceed the bound. Let, then, those who believe that the Queen was guilty as well as regards the matter of Darnley's murder as of the supreme act of folly spoken of above, indulge the idiosyncrasy of their imagination where they may, and in what manner they think good; but let them not mistake; for surely such sallies of unreasoning prejudice are not to be reconciled for a moment with probability.

Another principal effect of the murder of Darnley was that it reopened to Moray the road of ambition on which his feet were set. It had been closed to him by the Queen, and also by King Henry; but since the latter's death had now removed from his path one of the two lives that stood between himself and the throne, by so much, by consequence, was he thus brought nearer to his goal; and as having regard to this matter it was plainly the Queen's interest that her husband should live, so that of the other was as certainly that Darnley should die. Besides, Moray hated Darnley; and those whom her half-brother hated the Queen had good cause to protect and befriend, and this truth also she cannot but have known and apprehended well enough.

Further, as soon as ever the crime of Kirk-o'-Field became known to the Courts of the west, all rang with it, as ring with it they well might; and naturally, too, in proportion as the Queen's good name was attacked, and she lost credit in these quarters, so declined in them the strength of her cause and interest, so that in the event what happened was that Spain, the Empire, and the Holy See fell away from her, becoming, if not open enemies to her, yet the coolest and most critical of friends, at least. It was a part of the Queen's policy as well at this

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time as formerly ever to keep well with the Courts of the west, but though she were inclined to be indifferent as to the sentiments in her regard of these important centres of public opinion, yet it is little to be believed that she was so entirely indifferent to them as to contemplate with perfect phlegm the prospect of raising to herself a host of adverse Continental critics; for surely no one knew or could know better than she did that this was precisely the effect which the crime in question was bound to work, so far as she was concerned, in the quarters mentioned. In fine, it seems to me that what we must needs presume, if we accept the theory of the Queen's guilt, is that she was entirely out of her senses at the time, not only particularly, that is as regards the crime of Kirk-o'-Field, but also generally, that is as regards each scene of political action in which her cause and interest appeared.

As to the effect wrought by the crime in respect of public opinion in her own country, to describe this as unsettling in the extreme at a time when all her efforts were bent to the keeping it as favourable to herself and content with her rule as might be, is but plain truth, and, too, truth of uncommon strength, if regard be had at this conjuncture to what happened to the Queen and the realm by way of consequence to Darnley's murder, as soon as ever the full political and social effects of the crime were discovered. Here, again, was nothing but loss and injury to the Queen and her cause at home and beyond the Border; but, at the same time, loss and injury to both, which, reasoning on the theory of her guilt, were plainly provoked entirely by herself, whose interest at the time was, not to stir up trouble to her cause and self at home, but, on the contrary, to keep

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her kingdom quiet and the opinion of her subjects, as well as that of the Catholics in England, as favourable to her and her interest as might be. Approach, O memory of a much misunderstood queen, and contemplate in history the surprising absurdities with which thine enemies have charged thee!

Lastly, what sure proof is there that the Queen was privy to her husband's death? It is alleged by some that at the conference at Craigmillar, which was held not long before the murder was committed, the Queen spoke darkly about her husband, in short, gave voice to words which, considered in the light of the event spoken of, incriminate her in some sort, though, it is commonly allowed, not positively. But what really passed on this occasion, so far as the article of the King is concerned? Is it not that the subject of the King, his grave misdemeanours, his many promises to amend, and as numerous failures to keep these promises, and the stark madness in general of his public and private conduct being debated in a way and sense entirely unfavourable to him by such as were present in the cabinet at the time, the Queen came to express herself as willing that, in view of her husband's past and continuous misdeeds he should be excluded her councils for a while at least; but that, knowing well that some of those now before her were sworn foes to Darnley, and fearing for his life on this account, she took occasion of the conjuncture to warn the company against the use of violence in his regard? Events happen, and such as I intend are of daily, if not hourly, occurrence among us, which, judged in the light of the conjunctures that witness and give rise to them, seem natural enough, mere ordinary conduct, everyday occurrence, and so stand in no need of

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particular explanations, much less special pleadings on the part of any one; but which, torn from the context of the hour and the event, as it were, and twisted thereafter by designing minds, may well seem to some at least proof of some ill intent, or hidden meaning, or purpose that were better kept concealed than declared. It is plain that to the former order of occurrences belong the Queen's action and her spoken words on the occasion mentioned; but, on the other hand, to that of unsupported and unsupportable innuendo belongs the interpretation placed on the same incident by her enemies of those times and by such as have inherited their animosity to her, and pursue with it her memory in these.

When King Henry fell sick at Glasgow, the Queen, who was then at Stirling, sought him out, in furtherance of the plot to kill him, say her enemies; but commiserating his unhappy state in her tender heart, to take care of him in his sickness, and watch by his bedside, say others a deal more reasonably, and with a charity which these others lack. Similarly, when Darnley was carried from Glasgow, and lodged in Kirk-o'-Field, and the Queen visited him there daily, these things, also, were done (for so affirmed her enemies, and so believe a few to-day) for a pretence, so that the Queen's grace might not be smirched when the hour should strike, and murder be done. We are told by some that on the eve of the crime of Kirk-o'-Field, the Queen caused certain articles of value to be removed from the house in which her husband lay, since (for so they insinuate, and thus would they have us to believe) this Queen of so saving a mind, but so hardy a criminality, was not wishful that these objects should be destroyed together with the building in which her husband lay. Baseness of mind, as meanness of

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soul and nature, will appear ordinarily no matter what disguise they who are so afflicted by nature may seek for it, or subterfuge they may fall on, to the end that the odium and the contempt with which mankind in general regards impartially all such characters, may be diverted from them, who deserve them richly. If the lie can be forced back so as to recoil upon itself, slander obliged to consume its own vomit and thus perish; innuendo incited to wound the hand that nourishes it; and false witness provoked so as to strike the breast that cherishes it, then let these fates befall all such whose mean insinuations in this particular render them deserving of such fates, and worse; since, judging the Queen by the baseness of their own natures, they presume to charge her with conduct not to be imagined for a moment of any true queen: conduct which is an outrage on the family that bred her, and an insult to the nation whose throne she filled.

A rally of affection, or it may well be pity alone, not unlike to that which in medical experience sometimes precedes, and affirms, the approach of death, occurring in the heart of Mary, thus was some rare brightness brought to Darnley's closing days on earth; and in the glow of this brief idyll, horizoned like an interlude of fair amid foul weather with storm and heavy cloud, the sun of his life descended.

As to the proof lodged in yon box of epistles, well after the event apparently, it resembles that of Pandora of old, whose evil contents (all save one, the fable goes) were loosed to the world at the touch of a curious woman's hand. Still, there would appear to be this distinction at least in respect of the two caskets, namely, that whereas the contents of Pandora's box were unknown till the lid was lifted, Moray's, on the other hand,

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were known to many for some time before the box was "discovered." Bothwell is supposed to have left it behind him when he and the Queen withdrew from Edinburgh shortly before the affair of Carberry Hill. The credulous who oppose the Queen, believing that she was privy to her husband's death, may as well believe this as they may believe other fables to the same effect to which the story gave rise at the time; but those who are less credulous by nature, and more inclined, and it may be more expert, to examine proof so as to extract from it whatever truth it may contain, will not, I imagine, be thus easily amused; but will object to it, in the first place, that all the circumstances surrounding the finding and production of the box and letters are as suspicious by nature as can be. It is plain that if Bothwell forgot the box when he left Edinburgh, the powers of memory of his mind must have declined remarkably since the day on which he remembered to produce the band¹ signed by the nobles who professed to think him guiltless in the matter of Darnley's murder; and surely, too, simultaneously with the decline spoken of, another quite as surprising in the circumstances must have occurred; and that is, that Bothwell should have come to attach so little importance to the political aspects of his bid for power as to leave in the hands of his enemies a box containing the plainest evidence against him. Presuming that the tale of the finding of the box set forth by Moray and his faction is truth, it should seem, then, that conduct more entirely foolish than that which, on this supposition, is chargeable upon Bothwell it would be hard to imagine, and as hard to parallel,

¹ In former Scottish political practice a "band" was a written instrument signed by all the parties to the undertaking that served for object to it. It pledged such as subscribed it to stand one another's cause and interest in the same even to the death.

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more especially as from what is known of his parts and character, it is as little probable that he was like to forget such a box at so critical a conjuncture of his affairs, as it was like to happen that he should in the Queen's interest destroy himself, now that he was married to her, and thus had control of her person and, to some extent at least, her fortunes also.

In short, it seems to me plain as can be that the casket is not to be considered otherwise than as a part of Moray's "frame-up" against the Queen on one hand, and against Bothwell on the other, both of whom he wished to remove from his path, the former in conformity to his original design of seizing the crown for himself, and the latter because, though he had acted with him in the affair of Kirk-o'-Field, yet he was his enemy, even as Bothwell was so to him. To kill two birds with a single stone is no bad economy of aim and effort; and to clear his path at one and the same time of the Queen and Bothwell seems to have been the principal object, as it was certainly the principal effect, of Moray's "discovery" of the Casket Letters—a most seasonable "discovery," no doubt, in respect of his own cause and interest at the time, but one that was neither conducive to his good name in those days, nor is favourable to his memory in history.

Condescending now to the subject of the letters themselves, it appears that Major Mahon, who is the latest writer on the Queen's theme who has made a critical examination of them, thinks that of the gross the Glasgow epistles alone might be authentic; but since these same letters contain nothing to prove that the Queen was privy to the plot whose object was her husband's death, I prefer to dismiss them with the remark that, if authentic, very probably they were placed where they were found in

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order to "salt the mine," to give an air and appearance of authenticity to a collection which was, nevertheless, substantially spurious by origin. The trick was neither new nor, as it happened, true to the end for which recourse was had to it; for if the design of it was to incriminate the Queen along with Bothwell, it failed of effect, owing to the misty nature and uncertain import of the language used throughout the letters spoken of.¹

Who, then, killed Darnley?² The answer to the question is, that without a doubt Bothwell killed him; but that the latter was but one of several persons who, for different reasons, wished the King's death, and whose band was out against him at the time. It may be that somewhere along the dark and devious road and shadow-haunted paths that lead in history to Kirk-o'-Field, he who seeks this haunting scene of tragedy may encounter, though but for a moment of time, something as he gropes his way along which instinct, though no more certain sign, tells him is Moray, who wears his mask of alibi, and skulks in darkness, but always near at hand, as was his way when crisis threatened, and crime was in the air.

¹ The common argument that the notorious letter from Glasgow (which is alleged to have been sent by the Queen to Bothwell) could not have been forged, but must have come straight from the Queen's pen and heart, seems to me singularly inept, since it leaves entirely out of account all that has been composed by way of fiction since the art of written romance began. If the author of the scandalous *Detectio*, which, like his pretended history of Scotland, is in parts a collection of the absurdest lies, was not equal to the task of the composition of all the Casket Letters, then I mistake much his obvious fitness for the work, as well as the known propensity of his nature to shady transactions of the kind glanced at. The reader will find some further observations on this head in the Appendix to the present work.

² A plot to kill Darnley seems to me an entirely natural occurrence in history; but I think that one to set him on the throne of the Scots is very extravagant theory. Yet Major Mahon thought that such a plot was laid by the Jesuits, though he allows that somehow it miscarried at Kirk-o'-Field! And now Mr. Gore-Browne, the author of a scholarly and most interesting study of Bothwell, has followed, since the body of the present text was in type, in the other's footsteps. His reasonings are ingenious; but it seems not to have occurred to him, or yet to Major Mahon either, that the theory is invalidated from the outset by reason of its plain improbability.

CHAPTER IX

The Queen and Bothwell

THERE were three Marys at the Court of Holyrood; and in Scotland at the same time were three persons, each of whom aspired to a throne. The Queen was seeking that of England, and Moray and Bothwell that of the Scots. Darnley, who also had sought the same end, was now dead, and Huntly likewise; for if, as seems probable enough, he too had aspired to a throne the inclusion of his name in this list of candidates for high honours is plausible at least.

Of the different aspirants to the Scottish throne, probably the least eligible of them all, from a point of view of his power and credit in the country, was the Earl of Bothwell, the head of a family which, though it had very considerable landed possessions in the south of Scotland, yet was not in any way remarkable on the ground of its antiquity, or much celebrated above the common in Scottish history. Nor, it must be allowed, was the character of the chief of the Hepburns like to inspire much confidence or arouse much enthusiasm in that part of Scotland to which his power and interest were restricted; and as to the rest of the realm, in these parts he was little known, and had no interest to speak of, nor, apparently, was he there considered as a man of much political consequence.

On the other hand, there can be no reasonable doubt as to Bothwell's gifts of mind, and force of character, both which were considerable; and if to these advantages we add a handsome person, and, whenever he might have need of it at least, an extremely plausible address,

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the ascendancy which he at one time acquired in feudal Scotland, as some of the more remarkable of his proceedings as regards the public events of those times, becomes understandable enough.

He had his full share of the ordinary manly accomplishments of the age he lived in, and he seems to have been a good enough captain in the field, superior in this respect, probably, to Huntly, whose sister he married, though he cast her off when the time came for him to take for wife the Queen of Scots. Like most of his contemporaries of his own rank in Scotland, he was familiar with the French Court where he was always well received, but passed with some for a boaster, and a man of too self-assertive a temper, which no doubt was ever a part of the truth about him. In history as elsewhere, better, because juster, notions now prevail touching the intellectual attainments and the social accomplishments generally of Bothwell than was the case formerly, when the fashion was to set him down for an illiterate ruffian, one entirely devoid of all polish and social address, and by consequence much out of place in any scene or situation save such as the natural rudeness of his nature and the lawlessness of his ways rendered proper to him, and to those others, like unto him in this respect, whose society he was apt to seek, and kept of choice and habit. In short, though Bothwell might be, and was so without a doubt, on occasions, an entirely ungovernable man, ruthless in his ways and overbearing in his conduct, yet at the same time he was by no means without his share of the social accomplishments, of the airs and graces of the polite world of his day. A portrait of him that has descended from those times to these shows us a countenance not unhandsome

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indeed, but sombre, dark, and brooding, in fine, somewhat forbidding. Thus, he suggests, historically, MacBeth, who, like the other, was ambitious to a degree, bold, daring, headstrong and fierce, and, besides, little troubled with scruple or moral punctilio of any sort.

It appears that the principal source of the scandals which in history connect the Queen's name with the Earl of Bothwell was George Buchanan, the Latinist, who, having been recommended to her service, was by her given an employment at Court, but who seems to have had odd notions of repaying the favour so done him, since simultaneously with the composition of Latin odes extolling Mary's nature and virtues, he was preparing secretly his *Detectio*, or pretended exposure of her, which is as full of lies touching her as, they say, an egg is of meat.¹ He was a tool and creature of Moray's; and it may well be that besides grossly libelling his royal mistress in his *Detectio*, he was of further service to his patron in helping him to lay the train of the Casket Letters, since some of them bear a strong resemblance to the style he used in some of his writings. Besides, he had all the qualifications necessary to the task spoken of; that is, a mind and hand trained to letters, a vast gift of

¹ It is no part of the plan of the present work to present a detail of this reign; but the following instance of Buchanan's mendacity, which is typical of many similar offences committed by him in the course of his narrative, may lead perhaps from this one example to the detection of others no less silly and impudent, that may appear in the same work. He says that when in October 1566 the Queen and Court were at Jedburgh Mary, learning that Bothwell had been wounded in a foray, immediately took horse and galloped to his bedside. He supposes this to have occurred on October 9th; but the true facts are that the Queen remained at the town named, where she was holding an assize, till the 15th of the month mentioned, when she certainly went to visit the wounded Bothwell, but had in her company at the time Moray, Huntly and other persons about the Court, as well as the usual escort. On the return journey, the Queen, the weather being very inclement at the time, caught a severe cold, of which she near died; but, later, when Bothwell, still sick of his wounds, was taken in a litter to Jedburgh, the scribe seeks to improve the conjuncture by renewing in his pages the Queen's amour with her Warden of the Marches (Bothwell), ascribing to it the illness, of which she suffered at the time!

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romance, judging by his *History of Scotland*, and, apparently, an entire absence in his moral composition of scruple and conscience.

The public career of Bothwell forms no true part of the present narrative, and for this reason such questions as that of the time and the manner of his first coming to the Queen's notice, I leave it to others to debate and determine, if they may. He was certainly high in her esteem at the time of the foray in which, being then about the Queen's service, he was severely wounded in the year 1566, and thereafter the progress that he made in this respect seems to have been both rapid and remarkable. Undoubtedly, his goal was the crown; but by what precise means, in what particular manner, he prevailed on the Queen to assent to a marriage with him, I am unable to say for sure, and therefore I can but conjecture touching this matter, as do others. For instance, Bishop Leslie, who lived in those times, and witnessed many of the passages that marked them, believes that Bothwell used necromancy in order to oblige the Queen to marry him. His words as to this matter are well worth quoting, and, too, bearing continuously in mind, not only because the Bishop is a dependable witness in respect of the events which he describes, but also because what he says on this head gives no sort of ground or colour to the tales that have been transacting since, in and out of history, as to the Queen's having been forced by Bothwell, that is, obliged to a marriage with him, whether she liked it or no.¹

¹ Bothwell took the Queen whilst she was on her way from Stirling to the capital, some show of force being shown by him on this occasion. If the design at the time was to throw dust in the public eye, which perhaps was intended, it appears that some at least who were in the Queen's following were not so blinded, but looked on the whole affair as so much stage-craft, the effect of collusion between the pair.

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After condemning the marriage, the Bishop's words are, then, as follows: "It must be added, as was believed at the time with every appearance of probability, that Bothwell threw the Queen's mind into a confused state by means of magical arts, and so brought her to consent to the marriage." By which it should seem that the "marriage" appeared to the Bishop so extraordinary an event, an occurrence so entirely unaccountable, humanly speaking, that to explain it in some sort he must needs have recourse to necromancy; and should such have been in truth the Bishop's state of mind about it, then small wonder at it; and small wonder, too, at his own endeavour to explain what most certainly needs a deal of it, namely, the Queen's conduct on this occasion.

To fathom the secrets of the female heart, to explain with success, beyond all manner of doubt, the different twists and turns of woman's nature, were surely extremely hard to be done. If, however, the moral conformation of the organ mentioned could be set forth in the form of a diagram, such as is used sometimes in order to illustrate medical writings, very probably in that event the representation so made would resemble very remarkably some of the more elaborate of those knots and interlacings of line and design that distinguish the later forms of Celtic plastic art. Beyond all doubt and above question, it is hard indeed for the male of the human species to understand with any tolerable degree of certainty his opposite in kind. Seldom does it occur that he is able to do this with moderate success, even in part; but it is also very observable that should any woman, no matter how knowing her mind, and psychological her intent, come forward in order to explain to us her sex, up to a point only of the resulting exposition is she a sufficient guide

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and a dependable witness. The deeper and more complex workings of the female nature woman herself seems powerless to explain, or perhaps is reluctant to expound, being moved, I suppose, by much the same instinct of self-protection as influences the craftsman who refuses to disclose to others the secrets of his trade.

What in particular persuaded Mary Stewart to give her hand in marriage to the Earl of Bothwell? The problem is many-sided; but it is complicated above the common by reason of the fact that the latter was under strong suspicion at the time of his having contrived the death of the Queen's husband, and by yet another circumstance, namely, that Bothwell was a Protestant, or, at all events, appeared to pass on occasions for such. It is plain, then, that to bring the Queen to the end spoken of one or other of two most powerful influences must have been at work at the time; and these were, I think, compulsion used against her in the matter by Bothwell, or, alternatively, compulsion in her regard by reason of circumstances; I mean the sort of compulsion whose principal effect is, odd as it may seem, to throw a woman into the arms of a man whom she neither really loves nor truly respects. Bothwell was generally suspected of the murder of Darnley, and, besides, was a man of indifferent morals and a Protestant. Yet the Queen married him.

We should do well to remember in the first place, that the crime at Kirk-o'-Field destroyed simultaneously Darnley and the Queen's policy—all her political planings and hopes, the schemes, labourings, and anxious strivings of years directed to one grand political end, were exploded—it may well have seemed to her for ever—the moment the powder that blew up the building in which her husband lay was ignited. She could not but have

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been prostrated in mind, anguished in spirit to an almost incredible degree, after so great and crushing a twofold disaster. The Queen was by nature sanguine; so that it is but reasonable to believe that in proportion as she had hoped, so she came to despair when so great misfortune overtook her; and when despair strikes the heart of one who has this quality in high degree, as for sure was Mary's case, then indeed does all the world seem filled with darkness, and further hope and effort in life but a sort of vanity. Still it is precisely at this conjuncture, when our world has collapsed about us, irreparably to all seeming, and hope lies dead within the heart, that sometimes a revivifying force, a sally of emotional experience whose genius runs strongly counter to the spirit of regret and despair, occurs, and taking by the hand, as it were, the cause that to all seeming was lost, raises it, for a while at least, to life and vigour again. History gives many such instances of spiritual resurrection formed to temporal ends, and human experience generally confirms to the full the theory of their authenticity.

If Bothwell was a rake—and his private history shows that such he was—then by affirming that, though he may have desired, yet that never did he love, the Queen, probably we shall do his memory no injustice in this respect at least. Nor, I imagine, did the Queen ever love Bothwell; for when the two came to part for good and all at Carberry Hill, each of them appears to have gone his or her own road with a nonchalance that is little consonant with the notion that the spring of this strange and fleeting union was love, allowing that the parting spoken of was none of their own seeking, but was dictated to them by superior force and the verdict of events.

No one can tell for sure, of course, what persuasions

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Bothwell used, or reasonings he employed, in order to bring the Queen to consent to marry him; and all save the most plausible conjectures on this head are necessarily denied to the historian, no matter how much some who have written on the Queen's theme, and who have licensed it to themselves very freely, may indulge it to the full, on this and other occasions. Since, then, Bothwell's object was the throne, to secure which he must needs first possess the Queen's person, it is but natural to believe that in seeking her hand in marriage he employed such reasonings as he thought were best fitted to persuade the Queen to trust to him her self and fortunes. In short, I believe that what he laboured at principally was to revive in the Queen's breast the fires of ambition which the tragedy of Kirk-o'-Field had extinguished therein for a while at least, keeping, of course, his own designs on the crown hid from her in the meantime. He may well have pleaded with her, in language proper to the occasion, that, despite the apparent destruction of all her immediate hopes and prospects of an immediate acknowledgment of her right of succession to the English crown, her cause was not yet undone, not lost for ever by any means, indeed, must certainly revive, and in reviving gain new life and strength to itself, provided that she would consent to trust her fortunes to him, whose arm was strong, whose standing and interest in the land were great, whose will was hard as steel, and whose devotion to her person and cause could not be greater, as he had proved to her when he was wounded, near to death, in her service, and on other occasions when, but for him and his friends, serious mischief might have befallen herself and the Crown. In short, these, I think, were some at least of the "magical arts" employed by Bothwell

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in order to persuade the Queen to marry him, and these, I suppose, acting powerfully on the "confused state" of her mind, now exposed in a very particular manner to assaults of this nature, threw the Queen for a while off her mental and moral balance, and thus was she swept perhaps, bemused but yet not bewitched, into Bothwell's arms.

I have left to the last a consideration having to do with this matter which probably should here appear first, namely, the religious and ethical aspect of the Queen's fall from the grace of Catholicity; but this, I hasten to explain, I have done of a purpose, since I do not think that considerations of the nature glanced at were paramount in her mind at the time spoken of. She knew, of course, that crimes such as theft, murder, and adultery are heinous sins, and no doubt she would have shrunk from them, had one or other of them been proposed to her, in the liveliest manner of conscience that can be. Still, excellent though her religious instruction had been, and essentially good though her nature was, yet she was rash, inclined to take short views, in any event less alert of heart and sensitive of conscience, where worldly interests, occasions and considerations were concerned, than she should and doubtless would have been, to her temporal as well as to her spiritual advantage, had her perception touching these matters, their probable consequences, and the contingencies appertaining to them, been clearer and livelier than it appears to have been at this time. Besides, so strange at times are the workings of the human heart, and so great our powers of self-deception, it is possible that in all sincerity the Queen judged that in marrying Bothwell, and thus incurring the obloquy which such a union must necessarily

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occasion her, nevertheless she was about to do the cause of religion in the west a service of consequence, since by this means, and with his aid, was there not good ground for hope that even yet the succession of England might be hers, and that through his channel she might recover such power to succour the cause of the Church as she had now lost, and farther acquire to herself new and much greater strength of power in order to the same good end? If the doctrine that the end may justify the means employed in order to bring it about be ethically unsound, as I suppose, generally speaking, is the case, yet of the vast antiquity of this notion, its frequent practice, and its power to seduce minds, warp judgment and corrupt natures—to this effect surely history, as well modern as ancient, bears ample witness.

As to Bothwell, his cause in Scotland was hopeless from the first. The ruling powers of the south, that is to say the great feudal lords, would never have accepted him for king; and as to the greater Scotland that lay beyond the borders of the feudal power, here he had no interest whatever, was little known, and less regarded probably. The Hamiltons, to whose standard the Queen fled after her escape from Loch Leven Castle, were of themselves strong enough to drive Bothwell and his followers from the kingdom, independently of any such concert of arms against him as must surely have come to pass, had he been successful in running the gauntlet of his first appearance in the field in the capacity of king-maker in his own interest. In fine, the enterprise in which he engaged was doomed to failure from the moment of its inception; and perhaps the fact that he died insane, some years after his flight from the kingdom, explains sufficiently both him and it.

CHAPTER X

The Curtain Descends on the Queen

ON May 13th 1568, an engagement was fought at Langside, a village situated within a few miles of Glasgow, at which the Queen's men were defeated, and her enemy and half-brother, Moray, gained the day. The two armies were pretty evenly matched in a point of view of numbers; but since the Queen's army, the superior in this respect of the two, consisted of but some 6,000 men, it is plain that either the country as a whole was not greatly interested in the quarrel and its causes, or that neither side had been able to collect to its standard any considerable number of men before the engagement spoken of occurred. Certainly, so far as the Queen was concerned the second of these two conjectures would appear to be the more plausible, since shortly before her escape from the Castle of Loch Leven, nine earls, a similar number of bishops, eighteen lords, twelve abbots and priors, besides a large number of the lesser nobility, had subscribed a band of maintenance of her cause; and doubtless had she waited till these influential persons had sent to her standard their full military strength the event of the battle fought at Langside might have been favourable to her arms, instead of the reverse.

The victory was complete, and in the rout that followed it the Queen, attended by a few persons, galloped from the field—post-haste, to the south. Mr. Hume Brown, one of the general historians of Scotland, thinks that she fled from Langside “on veritable wings of fear”; but for my part I doubt much whether it was these useful

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journalistic inventions that carried her rapidly towards the Border on the occasion spoken of. In any event, I allow that the cause, as the direction, of the Queen's flight is a matter of some moment in history, and as it has a particular bearing on the present work I propose to devote a few words to it at this juncture, and some too, to the other matter here coupled with it.

Panic fear, such as is said by some to have befallen the Queen when she saw that the day was lost, seems to me little consonant with what we know touching her nature and her conduct on the occasion of some passages that had happened to her formerly, though it is supposition useful enough, no doubt, on the presumption that the Queen lost her head as well as her cause at Langside; and the former is precisely what some writers on her theme hint at, even if they do not affirm it in so many words. They derive colour to this opinion from what happened when the Queen, after she had been on horseback three days and three nights almost continuously, reached the shores of the Solway Firth, some of those who were with her at the time going down on their knees before her, beseeching her not to leave the kingdom. But she would not listen to them: distraught, *mar mhaighich eadar chonnaibh*¹ she would not nor could she listen to reason; but taking ship was carried over sea to a small town called Workington in Cumberland, whence, in a while, she made her way to Carlisle, which began her long imprisonment of eighteen years.

The Queen was under no sort of military necessity to desert her country after the battle of Langside; and for my part, I think that she knew this as well at least as

¹ "Like a hare between hounds." Iain Lom, a Gaelic poet of the following century, is the author of this perfect figure of panic fear.

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any who have studied her reign to some purpose can know it. Still, allowing that she thought that her cause was lost entirely at the battle named, it is plain that common sense and good policy alike required that she should seek a retreat for herself in her own kingdom, rather than in a foreign country. The Queen's commander at Langside was the Earl of Argyll, who at the conclusion of the engagement marched off the field with his men, and, withdrawing to his own country, there bid defiance to Moray, who for his part did not venture to molest, much less to attack him. Why, then, it may well be asked at this conjuncture, did not the Queen accompany Argyll to the latter's country, or follow his example to the extent at least of seeking a refuge somewhere within the bounds of her kingdom, which she was at perfect liberty to do apparently, instead of fleeing into England? In the hour of need that happened to it later some members of her family sought, and by no means in vain, as history proves, the aid in arms of the Highlands, shrunk greatly though they then were, and reduced in military strength, and less united, though they then were. Why, I repeat, did not the Queen take the course here glanced at? And wondering history can but echo the enquiry.

Or she might have fled, if fleeing was indeed her mind at the time, to France, where she was sure of a friendly welcome on the part of many of her former friends, and a sure and safe retreat at least, till affairs mended, and some new turn of events might come to pass to revive her drooping cause, and set her feet once more on the uncertain road to fortune. True it is, no doubt, that at the time spoken of France was in distress, distracted, as was Scotland, by civil and religious disputes, a feeble

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government, and a low exchequer: still, considered as a place of refuge for the Queen, France would have been, one would think, all ways preferable to England, whose people were hostile to her, and whose Queen was turned against her.

Or she might have betaken herself, her cause and her fortunes into Ireland, whose relations with an important part of her own kingdom were cordial and intimate yet, and had been so, all time and written record out of mind; where she would have been sure of a welcome suitable to her state and circumstances, from such of the nation as professed the Catholic Faith, and the old quarrel with the English, within and without their country; from whence, too, all memory of Edward Bruce sometime high King of Ireland, was not departed yet.¹

But unfortunately for the Queen at this great crisis of her fate and fortunes, her choice fell on England; and so to England she fled. The strength of the resolution to which her mind was brought at this conjuncture is plainly reflected in the circumstances of her flight, and more particularly perhaps in that incident of it which is touched above, by which it appears that she would not yield to the prayers of those who besought her, even on their bended knees, not to desert the realm. It seems to me a deal more consonant with her nature that she should show this resolution of mind and strength of purpose in the circumstances in which she now was placed than a blind obstinacy, and an unreasoning attachment to whim,

¹ The Queen's father and predecessor on the throne of the Scots would not allow that the English had right or business in Ireland, and once protested to Henry VIII in this sense, on the strength of the ancient relations between the two countries. Possibly the plantations of Scotsmen in Northern Ireland effected by James VI and I were grounded, no matter how shadowily, in this very claim.

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or a panic fear on her part, which is what we must needs believe of her if we believe that her flight from Langside was made on the impulse of the moment, and not in consequence of a pre-conceived design on her part. In short, what I think on this head is, that the Queen of Scots took the road to England after Langside because she was resolved to seek the aid of Elizabeth in order to her restoration to power in Scotland, and also—and I suggest that this was uppermost in her mind at the time—because the Queen was resolved to come to terms with Elizabeth touching the matter of the succession to the English Crown. This, I think, was the magnet that drew to itself with irresistible force the loadstone of Mary Stewart's fortunes, and so this, I think, is the true explanation of the Queen's flight into England after Langside.

We who have power to see, and so are apt to judge, the Queen's resolution in the light cast on it by the event, that is by the fate which in her own person overtook it—eighteen years of imprisonment in English strengths, and, by way of sequel to this long and cruel captivity death by the headsman, may wonder much perhaps that any so entirely hazardous a resolution as the one spoken of should have occurred at any time to the Queen's mind; and I for one allow freely enough that, on the face of it, the choice made by her, as the road she took after Langside, was fraught with peril to herself and her cause. Still, necessary to an impartial judgment on this matter is some knowledge of the Queen's state at the time she came to take this resolution, as are so, too, just notions touching the circumstances in which she was placed at this conjuncture; for unless due allowance be made for both, and a reasonable heed given

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to them, we are like to condemn, and condemn as unreasonably, the Queen's conduct in going into England after Langside as, on the supposition that on the occasion mentioned she acted without due reflection on her part, on the impulse of the moment (which some allege), we shall be apt to judge that in going into England she behaved like a fool. I propose, therefore, to devote a few remarks to these two matters.

In the first place, then, I presume that the Queen knew as well as any past or living writer on her theme can do so that when she crossed the Solway Firth she left behind her a nation which, considered as a whole, was greatly more favourable to her cause and person than it was so to those of the faction that opposed her; and I presume that having this knowledge, when she rode post-haste from Langside towards the Border she thought that no matter what might be the result of her errand into England, she would be free to return to her own kingdom whenever she might wish so to do. For my part, since I do not think that the Queen was now, or was ever during the course of her career in Scotland, absolutely mad, I decline to debate the matter of her resolution to go into England save on the supposition set forth above.

Secondly, and with regard more particularly to the presumptive object of the Queen's flight into England, I suppose that her notion was to lay her state and cause before Elizabeth, to the end that she might have the advantage of the counsel of the other touching the affairs of her kingdom, and the troubles through which it was passing at the time. Conjoined with this notion on Mary's part was, I imagine, another, that is to say that she thought that face to face with Elizabeth, it would be

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a deal easier, and all ways more satisfactory, to explain on the spot as it were the crime of Kirk-o'-Field, and the subsequent marriage with Bothwell than she had found it possible to do so with success at a distance, through the channel of letters, or that she could hope with reason to effect by the same means in the future, and further most certainly a deal more easily and effectually by her own means than through any one else's channel, no matter who or what he might be. In fine, I think that what the Queen intended at the time by her journey into England was to pay a kind of informal visit of State to the English sovereign, to be followed in due course by a series of "heart-to-heart" conversations between Elizabeth and herself, in which should the topic of the succession of England chance to come on the carpet, in that event she (Mary) would take occasion to speak to purpose to the other on that head also.

Further to these conjectures, I do not suppose that it occurred to the Queen, for even a single moment of time, that Elizabeth Tudor would detain and imprison her; though I doubt not that some of those at least who implored her not to desert the kingdom contemplated the contingency spoken of, and used it very probably in order to enforce the pleadings which they addressed to her. It is plain, however, that, disregarding immediately the fact, as the object or objects, of the Queen's going into England, the presumption of her enforced detention there at the instance of the English Queen is what makes all the difference in a point of view of reason between what was in essence a very womanish, and on the whole a somewhat emotional device or course of action, and what was indeed, in the circumstances of the case, a highly rash and extremely hazardous undertaking.

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Mary Stewart had no personal knowledge of the English Queen, and allowing that what she had been able to collect touching the other's nature and intentions in regard to herself could not be altogether of a sort to inspire confidence in either the word or the deed of the Queen of England, yet, that the Queen of England should come to use in regard to the Queen of Scots the harsh and unconscionable conduct which she held in her regard from this time forth till the bitter end, was perhaps as little to be foreseen by one as it was hard to be excused, when it occurred, by the other. Still, the fact remains that whether or no the ill result of Mary's sentimental journey into England was susceptible to be foreseen by her, or by any one else, happen most certainly it did, which proves sufficiently, I think, what has been affirmed already in the present work, namely, that Mary Stewart was far too sanguine and ever too trusting by nature.

Speaking now generally as to the matter of the Queen's policy, by which I mean the plan of political action laid at St. Dizier, my belief is that on the whole it proposed to her an undertaking, set her a task, that was much above her capacity to discharge it with success. The event proved fully that, all things—and especially her own nature and the quality of her mental gifts—considered and as carefully weighed, she would have done better, probably, to accept the counsel given her by Leslie than to follow, as she came to do, Moray's plan, allowing that the risks and hazards that appeared most plainly in the former were yet more considerable than those that marked the chosen policy. To affirm that the Queen failed entirely in respect of the "stout adventure" on which, at her uncle's instance, she embarked, is plain

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truth, so far at least as she herself was concerned; but should we seek to extend this judgment so as to involve in it the policy here associated to the Queen, this surely would not be consonant with truth; for so far as these islands are concerned the policy mentioned triumphed completely in part in the year 1603, and what is more it abides to this day. Certainly, if James inherited from his mother little else, the legacy of St. Dizier at least she bequeathed to him, who took it up, did what he could to improve and develop it, and, dying, passed it on to his son and successor. The same policy remained that of the family of Stewart till the direct line came to an end in the person of the Cardinal Duke of York; and though in the event it brought to the later members of the family named nothing but loss, and misfortune such as it brought to Mary Stewart, who was the first of her name to practise it, yet who can doubt with reason but that England has been a gainer by it—in short, but that it is at once the cause and the foundation of her present greatness? For until the three thrones of these isles were made one, it was neither possible for England to exist in security at home, nor yet to carry her arms, and establish her influence, abroad. Though it would be perhaps a little too obvious to remark that the Queen of Scots was in some sort the foundress of the English Empire, yet that there is as well excuse as ground for the notion is, I imagine, plain enough; nor is the fact referred to merely solemn paradox; it is also solemn history. The same policy may have reduced Scotland, and come near to ruin Ireland; but since these are topics of politics that do not belong properly to the present work, I pass them by in the meanwhile and proceed to other matters.

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As to France, by destroying the union with Scotland, the ancient friend and natural ally of the French in the west, the Queen's policy worked a double effect, since it obliged France to seek for aid and friendship elsewhere on the Continent, so that she might make good to herself that which she had lost through the channel spoken of; and the story of this quest is the main history of the French affairs, from the age of Charles IX to that of Louis XIV. Besides, the same policy cleared a way for the later English challenge to the French power, and, that of Spain being now in decline, the story of the struggle glanced at remains the history of the west, till the old rivalry between France and her ancient foe and neighbour of Germany was revived, when the cards of the politics of the west were reshuffled, but to what precise effect, so far as the old cause of the balance of power in Europe is concerned, is not yet declared, or discoverable, apparently.

Further, in the policy associated to the name of St. Dizier, it is plain that there is a second intention, which as plainly is religious by nature; but since the design of it was secondary to the other—in any event, it appears that it was not intended to be operative immediately—therefore I have thought proper to leave it here for a last consideration. The general effects of the Queen's rule and policy were disastrous to the cause of religion in Scotland. Her son and heir, born and baptized a Catholic, but taken in his cradle by the sectaries, and by them instructed in the principles of the religion which they professed but his house denied, was but the bubble of the ministers, who used him afterwards much as the factions in feudal Scotland in former times were wont to use their Kings—that is to say, to browbeat and keep down

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opponents, and engross to themselves and their councils the power and authority that belonged of right to the Crown. Besides, when the Queen deserted the realm another misfortune to the cause of religion in Scotland happened. She left behind her one of the strongest Catholic parties in the west of Europe; but, a few years after she was gone, this party, deprived of its natural head and leader, began to break up; and none then appearing who had sufficient force of character or yet talent enough to act with effect in the interest spoken of, the blight of the Queen's absence so spread among its members, that in a while the whole fruit was devoured by it. The political effects of the same policy elsewhere, is proof enough, were any needed, that, so far as the Queen was concerned, in the religious province, as in the other, it worked nothing but mischief. It defeated its own ends, since it destroyed the ascendancy of France in the west, for many a critical year at least, besides near wrecking the counter-Reformation and bringing to utter grief in the event the family with which it in some sort originated.

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I have read somewhere formerly—and I remember that I thought the authority good enough at the time—that on the morrow of her execution, before the Queen came to address herself to her last prayers, she said to some that were about her at the time, that she hoped much that her son might live to succeed to England; since she thought now as strongly as ever she had done so that the two crowns should be joined. He who rules his life by a particular idea, or is ruled by it all through his course on earth, prizes it often, and clings to it the

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more, when death advances with outstretched hand to take it from him; and so it happened, I suppose, on the occasion mentioned. As to the rest, without a doubt the story of Mary Stewart, Queen of Scots, her trials and tribulations, her sorrows and misfortunes, her accomplishments, her beauty, charms, her graces and ambitions: her many hardships and her cruel end, will draw men to it—perplexed by her theme, but ever responsive to its spell—*cho fad sa bhuileas tonn air tràigh*, as said the Gael of old—“As long as wave shall beat on shore.”

APPENDIX A

Some General Observations Touching Written History

HEAVILY documented histories are much in vogue among the Germanic peoples of the New as well as the Old World, and that they have their merits, besides their defects, is not to be denied for a moment; but lately the vogue spoken of is grown much: it has leapt frontiers and crossed seas, settling among the French, and in the west of Europe generally, so that a fashion that prevailed formerly at a distance, in but a few particular places, and on these accounts might well escape the general attention, now much draws us to it.

It seems to me that there are two principal objections to this method of writing history, the first of which is practical and the second aesthetic by nature. With regard to the first, he whose temper, whose natural particularity of mind, leads him to consult a vast variety of literary sources, and who spends much time and great labour in looking up old documents, scrutinising old letters, searching chests and charter-houses, and in the common practice of meticulousities of this kind, and when he has gone through all this heavy drudgery seeks to collate the mountain of matter he has thus accumulated, is very apt to emerge from the undertaking as confused, as perplexed in mind, as for sure the reader will be, who is so ill advised as to condescend to embark on this immense and troubled sea of verbiage. Further, since it is extremely rare for any two persons to be positively agreed in mind as to the precise cause and nature of events and passages that have occurred but lately, under their very noses, as it were, and so come to differ much among themselves in respect of the accounts (written or spoken) of these events and passages so for sure must they of old time have differed from one another in a like degree and manner; and surely, too, the higher we go in history, the farther back in it our curiosity or our

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industry carry us, the more will perplexity of mind increase in us, and the more uncertain by consequence will written history appear. It often happens that a particular situation in history can be summed up and set forth a deal more effectually by means of a generalisation (founded in intense previous study of this situation) than by a long series of "documentations." For instance, if we affirm that by changing her religion, which in turn changed her politics, the Scotland of history was destroyed, we establish by means of a generalisation a truth that stands in no need of "documentation" such as is practised by some historians nowadays.

With regard to the second point, it is certain that the old way of writing history differs much from the new, since in former times, before an author published his piece, his custom was to digest in private the different informations on which his narrative was based; whereas what takes place to-day is that all this necessary digesting of matter is done in public, in print; and thus are these historians brought to resemble some patients in some hospitals, who, out of love of the cause of science, yield up their persons to physicians, who have instruments that enable them to see what is passing within a man when the digestive organs are at work. This may be "science" well demonstrated; but, subjectively considered, is little attractive.

Of theories of history, as of the ways of writing it, there is no lack, and to the making of these same theories and ways no end, apparently. I suppose that all the great historians of antiquity have entertained, each one, his own notions as to this matter and in practice conformed to them, perhaps, more or less. Certainly Polybius, Xenophon, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (among the Greeks) wrote history as they came to conceive it; and Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus (to mention a few Romans) did the same, no doubt; but though we should happen to come at each such theory and plan, so as to leave no room for conjecture touching them, yet I doubt much if

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the cause of history would be much advanced by all this curious but belated discovery.

Consider likewise the moderns: let us in the meanwhile pass over the two great Florentines, Guiccardini and Nicolo Machiavelli, and choose from among some of the living, Mr. F. H. Fisher and Professor Toynbee, the first of whom has written a sketch of the Middle Ages, and the second of whom is engaged on a *Study of History* which will take him some time to complete, though two or three parts of it are published already. "It is no exaggeration to say," says a critic who reviewed lately in *The Times* the latest of these published parts, "that the greatest intellectual need of our age is a new interpretation of history," and the same writer thinks that Professor Toynbee is in a fair way to supply this pressing need. Wishes whose parentage is plain are very apt to be ushered into the world by their begetters together with some such strong recommendation of them as our critic employs on this occasion; but allowing that he is entirely right, that it is true that the age we live in yearns for "a new interpretation of history" with all the strength of its intellectual bowels, yet it little appears that Professor Toynbee's device—so far as the nature of it can be collected from such few parts of his *Study* (the whole work is to run to thirteen parts or volumes) as have yet appeared, is really the wonder which he himself no doubt intends, and his partisan in the columns of *The Times* evidently thinks that both it and its author are. "History (says the Professor), is the record, vast, fragmentary, incomplete, but nevertheless intelligible, of man's effort to make himself so prevail over the world about him, and over the moods in him, that he may transcend both it and himself." If this be not language at once loose and mystifying, still it is the reviewer's part to explain to us the other's meaning before he shall proceed to complete, in thirteen volumes, his "new interpretation of history." Naturally, in these perplexed circumstances one turns to the

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reviewer for a lead and some enlightenment touching this very important matter; but apparently the two mystics are so much of a ghostly piece that to expect plain explanation of either one or the other would be the vainest trusting to Providence. But no matter; here is how the reviewer expresses himself on this occasion: the aim of man, considered in a point of view of history is to be understood (he says) as being "the maintenance of perpetual contact between himself and God, through the perfecting agency of society." It might well be objected to this passage, as, with equal force of reason, it might be objected to the other quoted, that neither tells us anything to purpose touching the matter spoken of, nor leads us anywhere in particular, save it be to the point at which the whole inquiry begins. Both raise questions of the greatest moment, to which, however, neither one nor the other seems able or is willing to return satisfactory replies, nor very probably is it within the power of any one else to perform for us this most necessary service. In fine, I can little imagine that vague rhapsodical writing of this sort is really pertinent to the cause of the making of new methods of approach to history.

As to the other historian, Mr. Fisher's views touching the origins of history seem to me somewhat more matters of earth than the other's are concerns of heaven; and in proportion as they assume this reassuring aspect one finds them understandable; and thus are they rendered fit subjects of debate by creatures of this world. He thinks, then, that the common divisions of history are formed, not of time, according as we are used to reckon it, that is by means of centuries, by epochs, by "periods" and by ages, but by large complete "cycles," all composed of events that are susceptible to be grouped according as the several natures or qualities of the cycles demand that they should be first differentiated and then classed by the historian; and, further, Mr. Fisher's opinion is, that what gives rise as well to these different historical cycles as to the variety of their respective ethical contents is the ideas

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that sway the minds of the great and the illustrious of this world; and thus does it happen, he reasons, that humanly speaking, these few minds are in some sort the true begetters of the cycles themselves. For my part, though I much wish to have better understanding of Mr. Fisher than I do of Professor Toynbee, and regard him as much the more intelligible of the two philosophers, yet it seems to me that in neither case is either the true master of his own notions, or, in one of them at least, anything like it.

But since my portrait of Mary Stewart is narrative having to it a background consisting in a long series of historical events (reduced, however, to as small a compass as much compression can bring it to) demonstrably wrought by ideas, and, further, since my opinion is that no portrait of the Queen that has not this or some such background to it at least, can be true to life, really satisfactory portraiture—perhaps now some may seek to persuade me that I also am Mr. Fisher's disciple. I have all the respect for his talent, and admiration of his industry, that can be; but if I differ from him I differ from him in thinking his cycles no new discovery, but rather old theory dressed up again for new. I think they may well have been suggested immediately to his mind by those alternations of prosperity and depression that occur, from time to time, in trade and commerce, but whose precise cause or causes no man can tell us with certainty. And so I do not think his cycles an improvement on the established manner of reckoning time in history, that is to say by means of centuries, ages, epochs, and so forth; for if the common way of reckoning time in history is attended (as I think it often is) with very considerable disadvantages and inconveniences to the historian, yet to substitute for them the cycles, which is, I suppose, what Mr. Fisher intends, this, I think, would rather exaggerate than relieve the trouble and the perplexity spoken of. His wish to free himself for historical purposes of the trammels of time, according as this is commonly reckoned and

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practised in history, is understandable enough; but then his method of reckoning his cycles—that is, as I understand the matter, by means of the duration in active operation of the ideas by which he presumes that the great are swayed on earth—would be for sure inconvenience as great, if not inconvenience many times multiplied. For who is to determine for us the ideas, their natures, their properties and their functions on earth, either absolutely or relatively to one another? or yet so to distinguish clearly in respect of them, that the power of one to abide in time and space, to retain the force of its example and its power to mould natures and events may be shown so that the “value” of each absolutely, as well as relatively to the rest may be fixed with some degree of certainty at least? If echo can return fit answers to these very pregnant questions, the oracle in question would not appear to be known to Mr. Fisher. But let us now decline from matters of so high estate and instead condescend to others of more immediate moment.

For my part, I am apt to consider the point of view which an historian takes in his narrative as a matter quite as important as the text itself; for plainly, if this point of view, which necessarily affects the whole work, be demonstrably wrong, the writing will be defective in proportion as this inclination is indulged. The historian will fall from his reader’s grace, no matter how full and accurate he may be in particular parts of his narrative, or trustworthy with regard to some points of fact and even turns of opinion. And here I touch the principal reason why the large general histories of Scotland are scarce worth the reading, at least by such as apprehend well how our national story should, and might be, but yet is not, written. And since the writers of biographies and small particular histories are very apt to follow the bad example set by the others mentioned, much as the sheep of a flock follow one another, or geese their leader, so are the last no wise better than the first, whose errors of fact and eke of

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opinion they copy, and whose prejudices they share, and, in sharing, help to propagate and multiply enormously.

To make the nature fit the crime seems to be the principal endeavour of such as seek to fix on the Queen some at least of the guilt of Darnley's murder; and to defeat this endeavour, by means of representing her as a princely pattern of all the Christian virtues, seems to be no less the object of such as labour to give her rule and character an entirely different political motion in history.

For my part, however, I think that the Queen's rule and nature conformed neither to one nor yet to the other of the two extremes glanced at, judging the matter in the light cast on it by what can be collected from the best contemporary witness, and also in the light of the policy which she pursued as reigning Queen of Scots, that is, according to the part she acted during the course of that "stout adventure," as Randolph styles it, to which she and her fortunes were called by destiny. My opinion, which is also my complaint, is that in history, as in biography, too much weight is given, and too much space indulged, to the more dramatic—in other words, the more sensational events of the Queen's career in Scotland—the murders of Rizzio and Darnley, the intrigue and "marriage" with Bothwell, the imprisonment at Loch Leven, the flight to England, and so forth—and that by consequence not near enough of either is given in the sources mentioned, to events and incidents which, though they may be a deal less moving and spectacular by nature, yet explain the Queen's character, and discover the true nature and reasons of the Queen's policy in plainer fashion than do the others glanced at. I allow that the temptation to set the Queen and her reign on the commercial stage of history; to make "pictures" of her trials, her sorrows and her escapades, and what is worse, to reduce to the shady science of the psycho-analyst her "love-affairs," must be more than ordinarily strong in each of these suppositious cases; but I beg leave to observe that hardly is the

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Muse of history catch-penny sensationalism; who has neither aim nor object but to declare the truth—at least such truth as may be vouchsafed to her, or that she may discover by means of her own endeavours.

Some appear to think that the Queen's principal design was to re-establish "Romanism" throughout the British Isles; but for my part, in this ascription of a leading motive to her rule and policy I observe but an instance of misdirected and misleading zeal, and some imperfect reasoning. In the first place what appears strongly against it is that few if any of the princes of Christendom of those times had the interests of religion enough at heart to cause them to make it the object of an armed crusade; and, further, that if there were then in Europe crowned heads who had religion enough to inspire them to make some real sacrifice in behalf of it, the Queen of Scots most certainly was not one of them. Nor, to deal justly by the Queen and her French advisers, did the policy which she and the others adopted at St. Dizier oblige her immediately at least to any so hazardous and arduous an undertaking. The plain design of it with regard to the article of religion was that she should bide her time; that the Queen should succeed to the English and Irish thrones as soon as might be, and with as little disturbance to the civil peace and to religious belief generally, as might be. But were I to affirm that the civil policy of the Queen was so weighted as to sink entirely from view her religious policy of a reasonable toleration at home for Protestants, and with regard to their co-religionists of England a like degree and measure of benevolent neutrality, designed to plant her firmly in the good graces of those subjects, I might exaggerate somewhat; but even so I should have some good ground in truth for what I have advanced on this head. It was intended no doubt that after the Queen was come to the three thrones of these isles, she should proceed to endeavour in each of her kingdoms the re-establishment of the Catholic religion, and if I presume this end for a natural consequence of

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the dictates of her own heart and temper, as well as a reasonable effect of the temporal needs of the policy to which she was committed, I shall not, I suppose, be doing much wrong. In fine, my opinion is that to set the cart before the horse (which in effect is what the writers glanced at above attempt) is one of those ludicrous reversals of the common procedure which is apt to occur when things are done in too great haste, by minds in a flurry and inexperienced hands, though I allow, freely enough, that where the proper order of horse first and cart next is observed, there is ever a reasonable presumption that the horse will draw the cart, and the cart will follow the horse, till both are brought to a standstill.

Further, in narratives of the lives of famous historical figures it is necessary that a background, proper to the subject intended to be drawn, should be sketched in first; and the more boldly and surely this is done, the more true and lively the colours employed, the more striking and true to life the picture should be. But what takes place with regard to ordinary, that is painted, portraiture is rather the reverse of this process, the artist not coming to put in his background till he has set his figure on the canvas; and in this respect the two processes spoken of differ in the mode and manner of their approach to the execution of them. Still, if the best effects are to be had in both, the sketching in of the background must be done very carefully, with all due regard to the cause and occasion of the piece, and the circumstances proper to each case; to the end that the objects represented in it may be set in as true a light as possible, and in as characteristic a pose as can be.

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best of my knowledge has been observed to descend to earth from either of these mountains for these several years past. It was proved long ago to the general satisfaction of the learned that James MacPherson, and none other but he, was the author of "Ossian"; and it is acknowledged generally to-day that if, as some judge, Mary's hand was in the Casket Letters, this has not yet been proved at least, and what is more, is not susceptible of proof at present nor is it ever like to be so.

Still, though a volcano may be dead and past seismic resurrection as it were, yet it may well remain an object of interest in nature. It is interesting even yet to trace in the productions of James MacPherson the hand and spirit of the literary tradition of the Scottish and the Irish Gaeldoms of his day. He used both to some extent at least in his works most certainly; and the present writer has himself received and published specimens, in the shape of fragments of *bàrdachd* (poetry), which to all seeming date back to the days of Oisean and Fionn—notwithstanding that James was a counterfeiter of ancient Gaelic verse, and his Gaelic "epics" are mere fabrications.

Similarly, with regard to the Queen of Scots and this curious deposit of *malfaisance* which is known to history, and a deal of somewhat acid controversy, as the Casket Letters. Historically, they are but so much dead matter; since the original writings are all perished, or, if they are not perished, cannot be produced; so that to condemn, as to absolve, the Queen and her memory on the strength of the contents of documents of which but remain what are supposed to be copies of them, but yet may not be true copies in part or in whole, seems to me to partake somewhat of the spirit and procedure of that court of justice which thought to try a certain pig on a charge of deserting its sty; but was unable to do so in the event because (for, so some one informed the judge) the pig had been dead for some years. In short, no court of law in Christendom would accept the Letters for evidence before it; and, for my

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part, I see no good reason why that of history should be any less strict or yet a whit more accommodating. It is plain then that, so long as the originals of these letters remain lost to human ken, in any event unproducable, all debate and controversy touching and proceeding forth from them is for sure but waste of time and effort, in fine, an entirely vain and useless expenditure of learning and ingenuity in a point of view of serious history.

As to the originals, the Queen herself denied them, protesting always that they were forgeries which her enemies had put in circulation against her in order to her own undoing, which, for my part, I regard as extremely probable circumstance. But what may carry better conviction to some minds is, that Queen Elizabeth disbelieved them; and Norfolk, who at one time thought them true, thought differently after he had received some light touching them from Lethington, who, since he was Mary's enemy, and betrayed almost as often as he served her, must, I doubt not, have been shamed into instructing the other in some sense favourable to the Queen and the part she acted at the time glanced at. Even Sussex, and the English Commissioners generally, looked askance at them, as well they, as others, might, if regard be had to the very suspicious circumstances in which the pretended "discovery" of the Casket and Letters was made and the fact declared to a sceptical world; to the known characters of the principal managers and agents in that dark affair; and to the nature of the designs against the Queen and her throne which these persons were known to entertain at the time, and were commonly associated to their names for some time before the tragedy of Kirk-o'-Field occurred.

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